May 2015

Salt

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Our Spring Home & Garden Issue

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1233 Arboretum Drive · Landfall

This comfortable home has been meticulously maintained and features beautiful hardwood floors, loads of built-ins, a huge walk-in attic and workshop off of the oversized 2 car garage. The raised back yard terrace overlook a brick walkway that circles the home. **$599,000**

1008 Turnberry Place · Landfall

One of Landfall's premiere addresses, this home is surrounded by inspiring natural beauty and stunning architecture. The updated 4 bedroom, 4.5 bath home includes 1st floor master, formal dining and living rooms, comfortable den with tray ceiling and fireplace, home gym and large upstairs den. **$1,349,000**

380 S. Kingfisher Lane · Topsail

Located on a 25 ft. high bluff overlooking Virginia Creek, this 2008 home has views of the ICW and includes a private pier with gazebo and 2 lifts. The 4400 sq. ft. home features an open floor plan with low maintenance Hardie Shake exterior, Anderson windows, granite countertops, stainless appliances, an elevator, Rinnai tankless hot water heater, and CAT 5 wiring. **$995,000**

8108 Bald Eagle Lane · Porter's Neck Plantation

New construction on the ICW with private pier and views of Figure Eight Island and the Atlantic Ocean! The very open floor plan features 4500 sq. ft. with the addition of 1300 sq. ft. of covered porches. This 4 bedroom 4.5 bath design is well located on a bluff lot (out of the floor plain) and features 10 ft. ceilings and master suite on the 1st floor. **$2,695,000**

606 Waynick Boulevard · Schloss

Sound front living with a private pier and ocean views at Wrightsville Beach. Lots of outdoor living, hardwood floors and granite countertops featuring new construction and a grandfathered pier and floor system. **$1,595,000**

1 Oyster Catcher Road · Figure Eight Island

Glorious sunrises and spectacular sunsets abound from this unique listing! Extensive wrap-around decks provide the perfect place to enjoy incredible ocean, sound and inlet views. The reverse floor plan features 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths plus a vaulted great room and separate den. **$1,595,000**

18 E. Oxford Street · Wrightsville Beach

Spectacular views from this barely lived in home featuring 5 bedrooms, 5 1/2 baths and a gourmet kitchen with granite & stainless. A private boardwalk, outdoor shower, elevator, 1st & 2nd level gathering areas, oak flooring, bead board and paneled walls create an unparalleled Wrightsville lifestyle. **$2,750,000**

2120 Spanish Wells Drive · Landfall

Spectacular Landfall home in the Mediterranean style. Meticulously designed by David Call and constructed by Blanton Building, this 4 bedroom, 4.5 bath home offers unparalleled quality and unique style. Views of Landfall Lake, the Intracoastal Waterway and Wrightsville Beach beyond. **$1,800,000**

6404 Timber Creek Lane · Timber Creek

On the shores of Howe Creek with a private pier, this new construction by D. Logan Builders features open floor living with bonus room and bath above an over-sized 2 car garage. With 3 bedrooms and 3 ½ baths on the 1st floor and 10-12 ft. ceilings, it feels and lives much larger than its 3400 sq. ft. **$879,000**

2285 Allens Lane

This 5,721 sq. ft. home features an open floor plan with cook's kitchen (granite, stainless & cherry cabinets), & vaulted family room. 1st floor features dining, study & master with 4 bedrooms, 3 baths and huge rec room/home theatre over a 3 car garage upstairs. Double porches and waterfall pool. **$1,595,000**

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Here, Time Moves to the *Rhythm of the Tide.*

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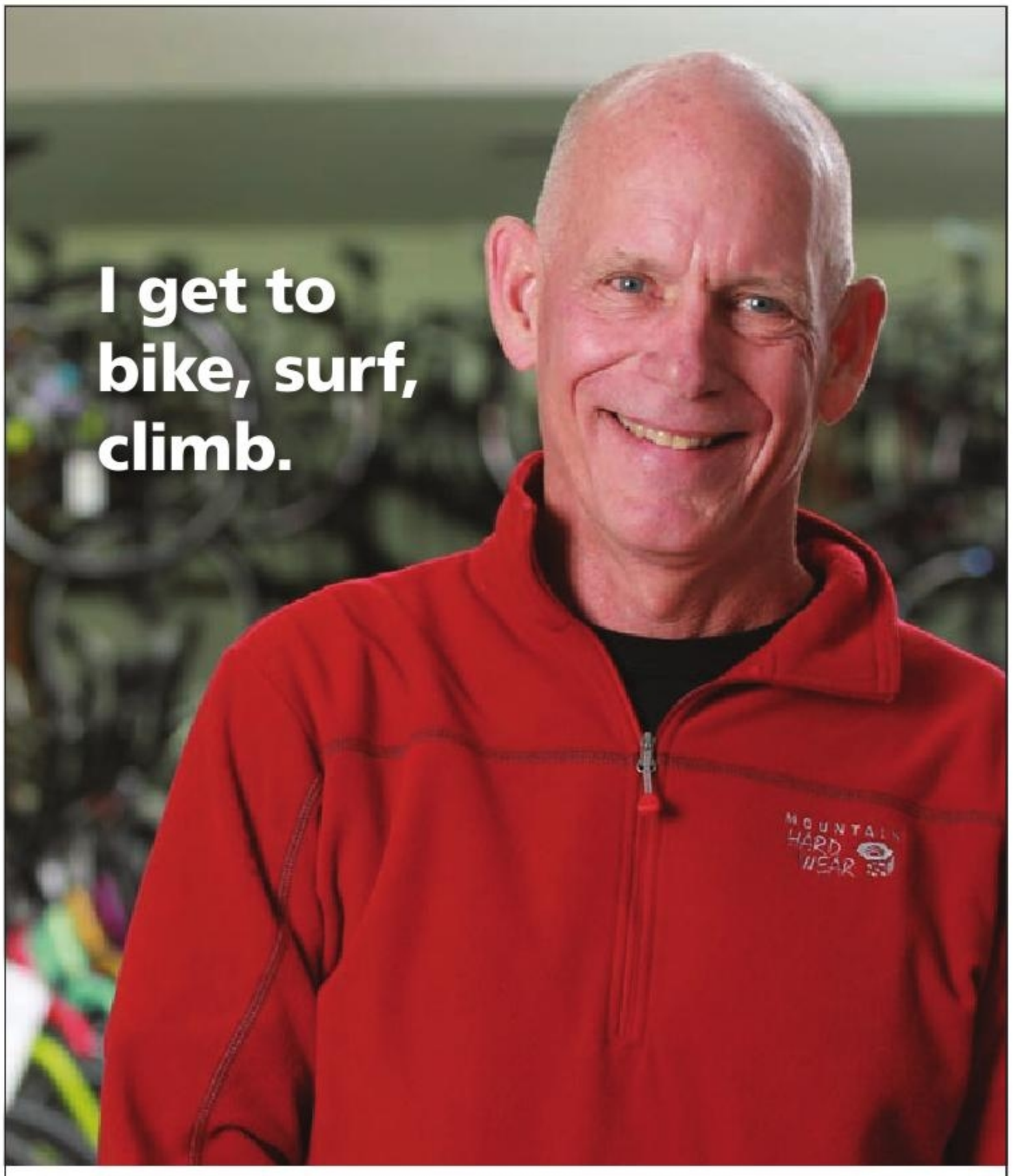

A succession of accidents: biking, surfing and hiking, left Jim's shoulders dislocated, torn and in constant pain. Rotator cuff surgery at New Hanover Regional Medical Center Orthopedic Hospital got him back – on the road, in the water, and on the trail.

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Salt
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1726 Fairway Drive — *Country Club Terrace*

Classic South Oleander home in one of Wilmington's most desirable, established neighborhoods. This house sits towards the end of a tree lined, cul-de-sac and backs up to the 11th fairway of Cape Fear Country Club's golf course. Offers hardwood floors throughout both levels, a formal living room with masonry fireplace, formal dining room, a study with antique heart of pine paneling, and a large family room with wainscoting and a bay window overlooking the sloping back yard and golf course. It is within walking distance of Cape Fear Country Club and is close to New Hanover Regional Medical Center, downtown, and shopping. **$489,900**

Reduced

1542 Magnolia Place — *Magnolia Place/Oleander*

This home sits at the end of an oak lined quiet cul-de-sac with side yard overlooking the 10th fairway of Cape Fear Country Club's golf course. This 3 bedroom, 3 bath home offers all formal areas plus sunroom, a cozy den and breakfast room, and a separate children's suite upstairs with bedroom, full bath and huge playroom. It is within walking distance within Cape Fear Country Club and is close to New Hanover Regional Medical Center, downtown, and shopping and dining. **$374,900**

8422 Emerald Dunes Road — *Porter's Neck Plantation*

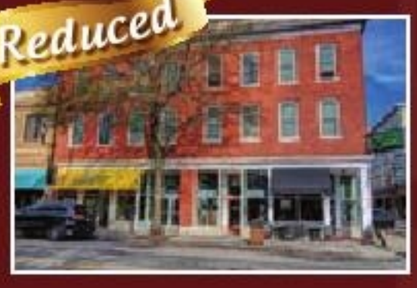
Immaculately maintained, move in ready home located in Porter's Neck Plantation. This 3 bedroom, 2 bath home offers hardwood floors throughout all living areas and 10 foot ceilings throughout the entire home. The large master suite is complete with sitting area, spacious bathroom with raised height counter tops, dual vanities, frameless shower and separate bathtub. The kitchen features custom cherry cabinets, granite countertops, and new stainless appliances and a breakfast nook with bay window. The great room has gas logs and custom built-ins. Enjoy the glassed in sunroom for year round use which is not included in heated square footage and a patio. Yard is maintained by HOA for low maintenance living. The gated community of Porter's Neck offers picnic area, day dock, and boat ramp on ICWW and is just minutes to shopping, dining and the beach . **$379,900**

New Listing

520 South Second Street — *Downtown*

Situated uphill just 2 blocks from the Cape Fear River and within walking distance to the library, theaters, art galleries, shops, restaurants, antique stores, and more. This home was completely renovated on the inside and features heart pine floors, a large master bathroom with claw foot tub and tiled shower, a cook's dream of a kitchen, 4 fireplaces, and a security system. This property is ideal for the single person, professional couple, or "empty-nesters" who appreciate the charm of historic homes and urban lifestyle. **$319,900**

Reduced



304 North Front Street, Unit 1 — *Downtown*

Experience downtown living at its best! This 1 bedroom 1 bath condo features hardwood floors, high ceilings and exposed brick walls giving it that historic district feel. This 2nd floor interior unit has all the appeal of city studio living with a nice size kitchen, appliances and high countertops to accommodate a breakfast nook or bar area. With pocket French doors for privacy between rooms and a glass block skylight window allowing natural light in, this condo is sure to be a quiet retreat away from any downtown noise. Also, conveniently located near Cape Fear Community College, the Riverwalk and downtown restaurants. Make your appointment today to experience the historic charm of downtown living! **$119,000**

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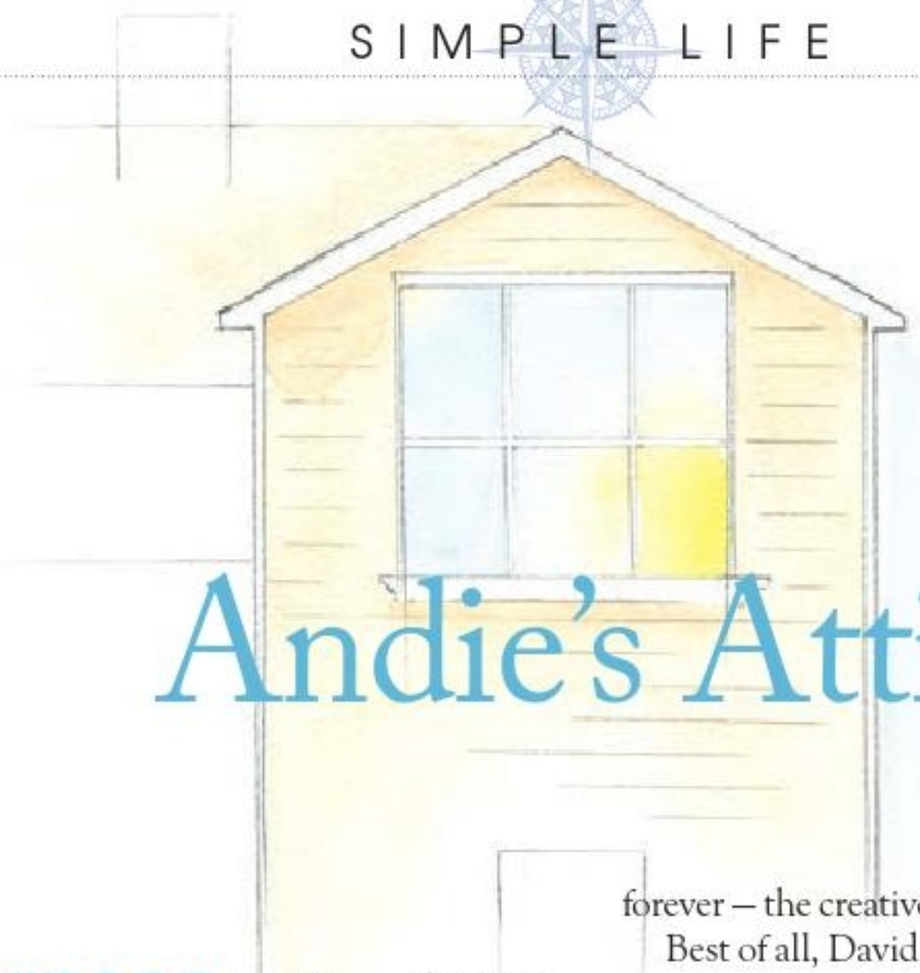


Andie's Attic

By Jim Dodson

On a warm afternoon in May of 2007, I climbed a set of stairs in an old mansion on Bennett Street in Southern Pines and knocked softly on the door of a cramped attic office.

A pretty blonde woman named Andie Rose opened the door and welcomed me to her creative aerie.

Andie was a founder and co-owner of *PineStraw* magazine, an attractive monthly arts tabloid with a loyal readership in the Sandhills. I was *The Pilot* newspaper's Writer-in-Residence who'd just come off his latest book tour and was weighing an offer to either teach writing at a college or accept a job as an editor-at-large for a national magazine.

We were brought together by *The Pilot* publisher David Woronoff, who'd recently purchased *PineStraw* by paying off one of Andie's partners for the price of a new set of golf clubs. David had always dreamed of adding a magazine to *The Pilot's* portfolio, and thus proposed that she and I simply meet and talk just to see if we had the kind of chemistry that could produce a good editorial partnership.

Behind her was a lengthy career in graphic design that included stops at major publications including *Texas Home*, *American Way* (American Airlines' in-flight magazine), and legendary luxury goods catalog Horchow.

Behind me was an even lengthier journalism career and book-writing life that included editorial positions on a trio of iconic magazines — *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Sunday Magazine*, *Yankee* and *Golf* magazines.

At best, I hoped we might spend a pleasant half-hour getting to know each other and bat around a few ideas that had percolated in my skull since 1989, when *Yankee* asked me to develop a distinctive Southern magazine that captured the soul and breath of the South the way *Yankee* did New England. Just as we finished the prototype, alas, the deepest recession in years stalled the project and I soon moved on to work as a columnist for *Golf* and originate the golf column for American Express's flagship travel magazine, *Departures*. The magazine I always envisioned was my unfinished business and one reason I eventually came home to North Carolina.

At worst I figured we would spend a few minutes chatting about our favorite magazines, and I'd finish up my work at *The Pilot* and be on my way to my old hometown of Greensboro to teach and write my books.

More than two hours later, however, we shook hands and agreed that the encounter felt, well, almost providential — or at least like the start of something special. Our shared ideas flew like confetti at a parade.

David's instincts were accurate — Andie felt like someone I'd known forever — the creative partner I'd always dreamed of having.

Best of all, David, Andie and I shared a distinctly old school notion of what a great magazine should be, displaying the traits great magazines have in common: wit, beauty, journalistic integrity and cultural relevance, a powerful sense of themselves and a clear editorial objective. Simply stated, we would aspire to be a reader's magazine that equally engaged the mind and the eye with brilliant storytelling and thoughtful design.

Not to put too sharp a point on this lively discussion, but as veterans of the national magazine wars who hailed from strong traditions of art and journalism, it bothered us both to see what passed for local magazines almost everywhere in America these days — shallow, vanity-driven, pay-to-play city periodicals (often produced by people from other places) that exploited their advertisers and specialized in flattering profiles of local movers and shakers, power couples and favorite burger joints.

Conversely, our excited conversation in Andie's upper office — her attic, as I like to fondly think of it, a place where we shared dozens of ideas we'd both "stored up" for years — amounted to a mission statement of what we might create together, her brilliant design ideas married to my love of meaningful storytelling using the best writers.

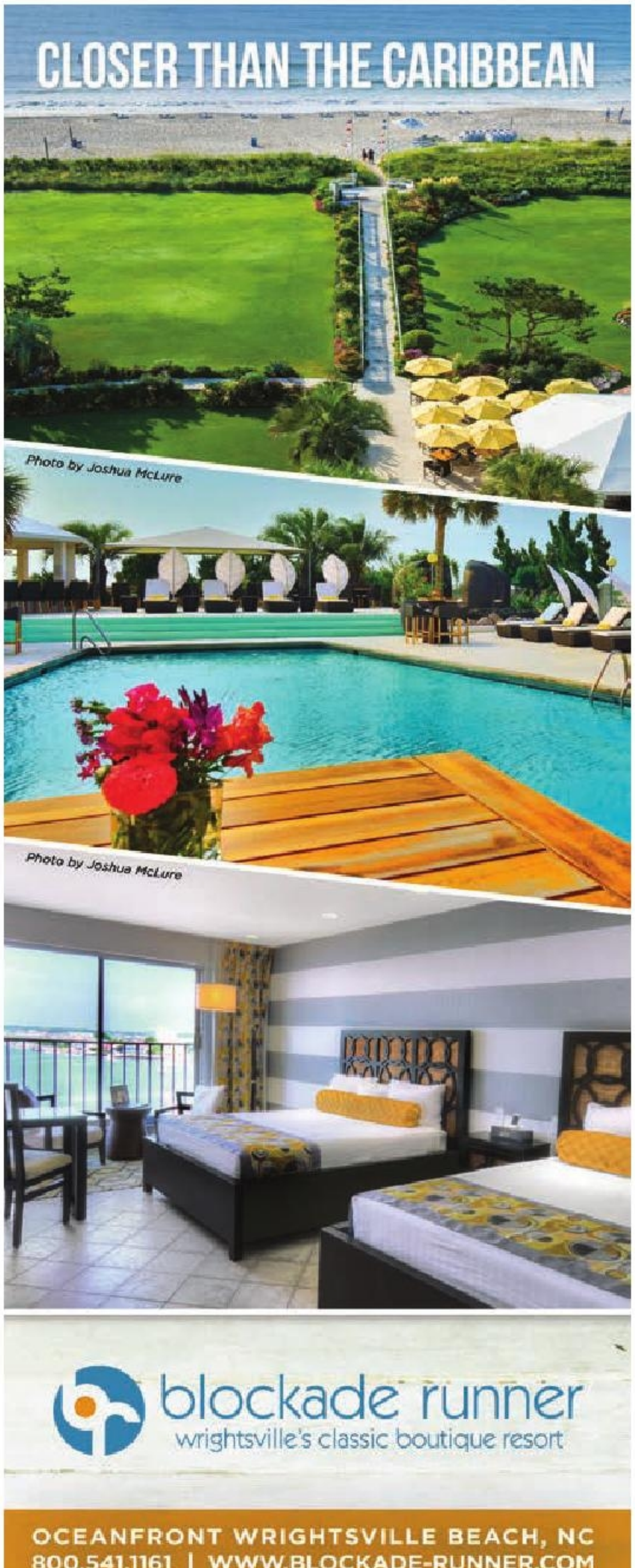
Evolution is a beautiful thing. I even eventually took to calling Andie my "day wife" because our heads were always together plotting and developing ideas that would hopefully surprise and engage our readers and advertisers alike, stories with both art and soul, concepts we would soon try out and begin refining into the unique DNA that became the new *PineStraw*.

But like any young "marriage," our beginnings were pretty humble. We started by sharing desks near the main bathrooms in *The Pilot*'s advertising department, which took on the task of selling our magazine space and quickly made a positive mark growing our pages. Andie and I joked that we were the magazine's staff of two and the company's de facto bathroom monitors.

With the advertising staff of *The Pilot* fully engaged and as revenue increased, though, we soon moved to the rear of the building next door where *The Pilot's* telephone directory operation was, a spot I liked because it was so quiet I could write early and late in absolute solitude. In those early days, I will confess, I obsessively wrote and rewrote much of the main content of the magazine even as I sought out local writers and encouraged them to use us as a platform for polishing their writing craft. It was exactly what I would have done with *The Southerner* had it ever materialized, or in a college classroom with budding young writers.

Roughly after a year we moved to a glossy format. Next we were able to hire a recent UNCG grad named Ashley Wahl, a delightful young poet whose enthusiasm to learn and be part of the growing pains and process of making a fine magazine was obvious from the moment we met her. Not long

ILLUSTRATION BY KIRA SCHOENFELDER



after this, reflecting the public's growing support of *PineStraw*, we expanded to a larger format that quickly became a hallmark of its appeal to readers and advertisers alike.

The following year, with *PineStraw* thriving, David and his four financial partners agreed to finance my vision of starting a magazine in my hometown. Ashley was the perfect staffer to send off to Greensboro to help launch *O.Henry* magazine in the summer of 2011. Given my deep connections to the Gate City, I knew exactly who I wanted on our staff. With veteran journalists Jim Schlosser, David Bailey and Maria Johnson onboard, the combination of our unique, home-grown editorial DNA and the Gate City's hunger for something wholly original helped the magazine quickly establish itself as the "Voice of a City," to paraphrase the magazine's famous namesake, William Sydney Porter. Our advertisers grasped this special magazine's appeal right from the beginning, too, I'm happy to report. They were eager to be part of something that celebrated the old city like nothing before it.

The most common tribute I hear from the loyal readers of both *PineStraw* and *O.Henry* is that they "read the magazine from cover to cover."

Speaking of wonderful old cities, it was perhaps also providential that the third sister publication, *Salt*, would be based in Wilmington. David Woronoff's family has long called Wrightsville Beach a summer home and my father worked at the *Star* newspaper for a time in my early school years. It was in Wilmington where I learned to ride a bike and swim in the lagoon off the causeway to the beach, spending almost every summer of my youth there, getting to know and love North Carolina's coastal capital.

The Port City's rich history, vibrant colleges and arts community, youthful music scene, stunning architecture, great families and unique outdoor life made Wilmington a natural place for *Salt* to thrive. Not surprisingly, I asked now-seasoned Ashley Wahl if she would consider relocating there to help launch the magazine, which she enthusiastically did two years ago.

These days, with *PineStraw*'s tenth anniversary upon us, I simply ride between our three outstanding home-grown publications like my great-great-grandfather George Washington Tate did more than a century ago. He was the polymath land surveyor who laid out the boundaries of North Carolina's central counties following the Civil War, reportedly made the bell in Hillsborough's courthouse and served as a circuit-riding Methodist preacher who established several churches flung across the northern tier of the Old North State.

I often think of old G.W. as I'm driving the beautiful back roads of Carolina, usually with my car windows cranked down and new ideas churning in my brain, triangulating between my three boyhood stomping grounds, often reminding me of the remarkable things that came from that late spring afternoon in Andie's Attic

Recently, another good thing came our way with *The Pilot*'s acquisition of *Business North Carolina* magazine, the state's leading business publication. With their strong legacy and our core beliefs about creativity and vision, we happen to believe *BNC* is going to be a very good marriage, prosperous for all concerned, especially the magazine's present and future readers and advertisers — a voice that will expand to exciting new horizons in the months and years ahead.

Finally, when I look back on that fateful meeting in Andie's office on Bennett Street, I'm moved and deeply gratified to see how our magazine family has grown so rapidly, a true measure of our aesthetic uniqueness — crafted by gifted writers and editors, talented designers and photographers at the top of their game – and even more excited to see where things go from here.

PineStraw is where it all began.

I can promise you, this grateful circuit-riding editor will never forget that fact.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@saltmagazinenc.com.

There's MORE than I see out before me, I KNOW!
But this VIEW is too sadly SELECTIVE.
If I could just SWIM in an OCEAN-SIZED pond,
I could see with a GLOBAL perspective!

So I'll JUMP if I can — and I MUST — so I WILL!
To ESCAPE this CONFINED situation.
And land in a WORLD that THINKS BIGGER, by far!
And pursue an ADVANCED EDUCATION!

Then I'll LEARN and EXPLORE and GROW and BECOME
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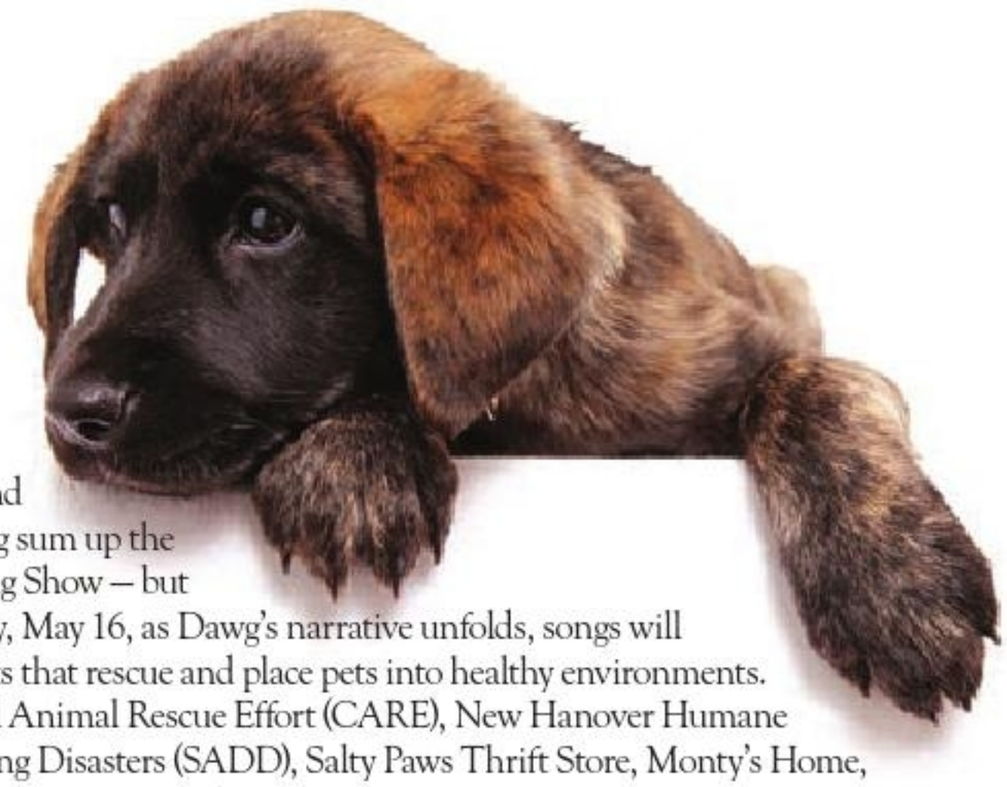
Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro, Pierre-Auguste Renoir . . . If mention of these Impressionist greats causes light to dance across your face, then this one's for you. Plein Air at Wrightsville Beach happens Friday, May 8, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., and Saturday, May 9, from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Watch painters capture the essence of historic Wrightsville just as they see it – in the open air. Site maps available; wet paint sale to be held on Saturday from 2:30–4:30 p.m. Free. Wrightsville Beach Museum of History, 303 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or www.wbmuseum.com.

What the Dawg Saw



Sweet a cappella harmonies and the story of a dog named Dawg sum up the Cape Fear Chordsmen's Spring Show – but there's more to it. On Saturday, May 16, as Dawg's narrative unfolds, songs will be dedicated to area non-profits that rescue and place pets into healthy environments. Organizations include Coastal Animal Rescue Effort (CARE), New Hanover Humane Society, Saving Animals During Disasters (SADD), Salty Paws Thrift Store, Monty's Home, Paws Place, Pets for Vets, Adopt an Angel, and Canines for Service. Think of each ringing chord as a joyous applause for their efforts. Arrangements to be performed by Hazardous Moving Parts, Beach Music, the Brunswick Co. Chorus, Coastal Harmonizers, and the Cape Fear Chordsmen, with a special guest performance by Whammy, the current Carolinas District Championship Quartet. Shows run at 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. An Armed Forces Day tribute will conclude the program. Tickets: $20. The Scottish Rite Temple, 1415 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 541-1256 or info@capefearchordsmen.com.

Coming up Roses

Roses are red. And pink. And white. And orange. And many other shades of lovely . . . all of which you can see this month during the Wilmington Cape Fear Rose Society's tenth annual Rose Garden Tour, free and open to the public. On Saturday, May 9, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., stop and smell the fragrant cultivars of nine local gardens, which include heirloom, garden and novelty varieties. See website for locations. Tour starts at the New Hanover County Arboretum on Oleander Drive. Info: www.wcfrs.blogspot.com.

Gather Round, Groundlings

When Queen Elizabeth reigned, groundlings forked over a single English penny – sometimes their entire day's wage – to see a Willie Shakespeare original. This month, Cape Fear Shakespeare Youth Company will perform an adaptation of one of his most famous comedies, *The Taming of the Shrew* – which you can see for less than a handful of magic beans (ay, free). Performances held May 22–24, 29–31 & June 1–2 (Friday through Sunday); and June 8–11 (Monday through Thursday). Cape Fear Shakespeare on the Green's regular festival show, *All's Well that Ends Well*, will run each weekend from Friday, June 5, through Sunday, June 28, 8 p.m., with additional Thursday shows on June 18 and 25. This year's festival celebrates 24 seasons of free outdoor Shakespearean theater. Don't miss it. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-2878 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

On the Fly

Last fall, *Salt* contributor Dana Sachs met Melodie Homer for lunch at Hops Supply Co. They tried the short rib nachos and chicken two ways, and sometime before digging into the brownie sundae, Melodie talked about starting the The Leroy W. Homer Jr. Foundation in memory of her husband, Leroy Homer, a pilot on United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. The foundation, which offers scholarships to help young adults pursue aviation careers, will host a Hangar Party fundraiser and celebration on Sunday, May 24, at 6 p.m. Live music by the Mango Band. Catch (the food truck) provided by award-winning chef Keith Rhodes. Silent auction, special aircraft and more at AviatMall, Wilmington International Airport. Tickets: $75. Info: www.leroyhomer.org.

Heart of Golder

On Wednesday, May 13, at 7 p.m., North Carolina Coastal Federation's Coastal Speaker Series features Walker Golder, Deputy Director for Audubon North Carolina, whose world class wildlife photography offers an intimate glimpse into his life and a bird's eye view of the coast. Golder has devoted his career to the protection of all birds — particularly coastal birds in North Carolina and across the Atlantic Flyway. In 2013, he received the National Audubon Society's Charles H. Callison Award for his efforts to safeguard the piping plover on Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Suggested donation: $10. Proceeds benefit education programming. Coastal Education Center, 309 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: www.nccoast.org.

Orange is the New Orange

Memorial Day Weekend, Orange Street Artsfest returns. Saturday, May 23, from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., and Sunday, May 24, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m, Orange Street will be festooned with art — acrylic, oils, watercolor, sculpture, drawing, graphics, wearable arts, leather, clay, glass, fiber, metal work and mixed media — booths stretching from Front to Second, plus more inside the Hannah Block Historic USO/Community Arts Center. Featuring more than seventy artists, the twentieth anniversary Orange Street ArtsFest will be juried by internationally known visual artist and longtime Wilmington resident Owen Wexler. Festival highlights include a high school art exhibition showcasing the works of students from seven public and private New Hanover County high schools, and an art booth featuring the multi-media works of the young artists of DREAMS of Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.thalian.org.

All Dolled Up

Just as Dr. Coppelius' beloved dancing doll comes to life in the eyes of a youth named Franz, this month, ballet's greatest romantic comedy will animate the stage of Thalian Hall in such a way that you, too, will be swept off your feet. On Friday, May 15, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, May 16, at 10 a.m., City Ballet of Wilmington presents Coppelia, a story of love, temptation, magic, and a mad inventor and his lifelike mechanical dolls — all told through exquisite dance. Sparkling orchestral score by Leo Delibes; dazzling choreography by nineteenth century master Arthur St. Leone; staged and adapted by City Ballet Artistic Director Andrea C. Hill. Tickets: $10–25. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

A Happy Refrain

Hollywood, late 1920s. Three silent film stars make a comedic transition into the brave new world of "talkies". If you don't know the plot, you still know the iconic dance scene that made Gene Kelly's wool suit shrink during filming. On Thursday, May 21, through Sunday, May 31, Thalian Association presents *Singin' in the Rain*, a play based on the classic film. Will make you wish you'd brought your hook-handle umbrella. Performances run Thursday through Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets: $30; $15 (Thursday). Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

You All Crazy?

As the old rhyme goes: One flew east, and one flew west, and one flew over the cuckoo's nest. This month, you'll want to fly over to Cape Fear Playhouse to see how Big Dawg Productions does *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, a play based on Ken Kesey's classic novel. Meet Randle P. McMurphy, Nurse Ratched, and, yup, the whole crazy-awesome cast. "When you lose your laugh, you lose your footing." Take Randle's advice and come with a sense of humor. Directed by J.R. Rodriguez. Show runs May 7–10, 14–17 and 21–24; 8 p.m. (Thursday, Friday and Saturday) and 3 p.m. (Sunday). Tickets: $22; $20 (students, seniors and military). Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 367-5237 or www.bigdawgproductions.org.

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Treasures Unknown

You might not need it, but if you want it, you'd better act now

By Ashley Wahl

It's a perfect spring morning — cool, bright, animated by a gentle breeze — and inside The Ivy Cottage, Tammy Needham flits gracefully between customers like a honeybee among flowering mint.

"I always tell people, if you come with an open mind, you'll find something," she says to one shopper. Moments later, she is asking a regular about her cats.

The Cottage is no hidden gem. More like a gem mine. And chances are, if you travel anywhere along the East Coast, you'll run into a collector who has either shopped at or heard about this Market Street marvel — a four-part consignment complex whose mere mention evokes the kind of commotion you might expect from a hen house.

"It's kind of an institution," says Tammy. "People come and spend the whole day, sometimes only breaking for lunch next door at Indochine."

Yesterday, a lady found a Tiffany vase still in the box.

Today, a woman from Washington, D.C., is shopping with her mother.

"Every year we come here," they say.

**

On this particular Tuesday morning, a couple moseys past a pair of metal sling chairs in Cottage One and stops in front of a chic drop-leaf bar cart painted gray.

"Now this would be nice to have outside," says the man to his wife, who gives the piece a quick glance-over before turning her attention to a shelf full of tchotchkes.

"That's too nice to put outside," she says, offering a sympathetic laugh. "It'll get rained on and get ruined. We can't do that."

But the man persists.

"It's on wheels," he says, although his wife has vanished into the back room where items are half-priced.

"Nance?"

"Uh-huh?" she calls back, although it's really more of a reflex.

"It's on wheels."

"Very nice . . ." she says, inspecting a set of long-stem brass goblets marked down to $18. "Like a moveable island . . ."

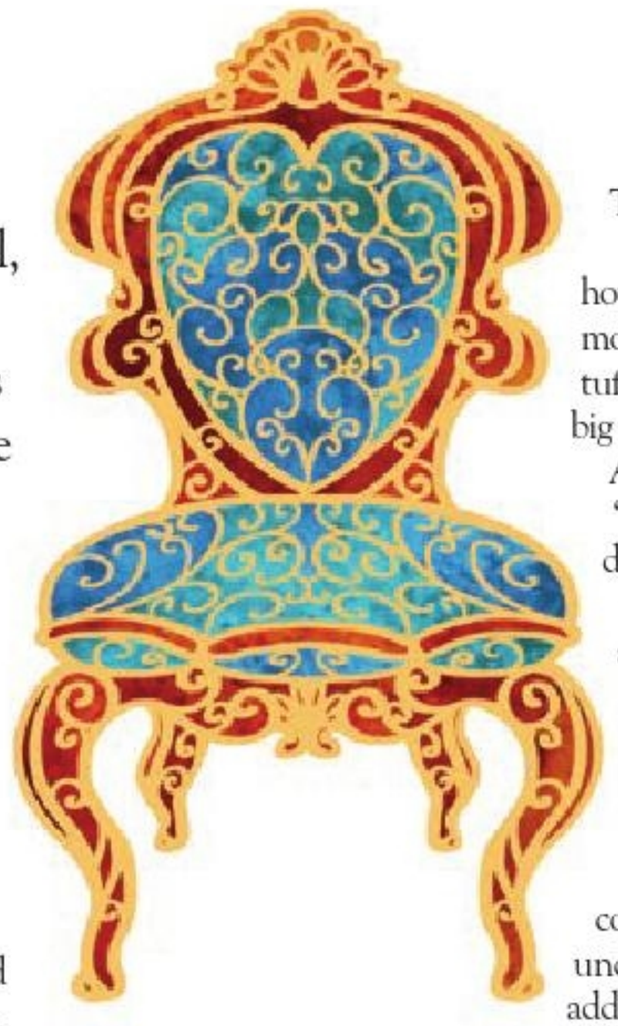
Her husband is looking at the tag — $350 if they buy now — but his wife doesn't miss a beat.

"Look," Nance says, pointing to a portrait of a dog. "It's like Lola when she was a pup."

He walks right past it.

"Yeah, well, the Florida sun will bleach it," he retorts.

**



Having worked at the The Ivy Cottage for two years, Tammy seems to know all the ins and outs.

Inside Cottage One, the ivy-covered building that once housed the shop's entire inventory, she points out some of the most interesting pieces, including a Maitland-Smith table and a tufted leather sectional shipped from Colorado but, sadly, too big to fit into the owner's new Wilmington home.

And so it wound up here.

"Every piece has a story," says Tammy, making her way past displays of vintage door knobs and oil lamps, beer steins and wooden tap handles, toward a massive copper-framed mirror surrounded by a sea of curios.

"This vendor salvaged the double-hung copper-clad windows from the famous McAlphin Hotel of Manhattan's Herald Square and converted them to mirrors," she says. "We went crazy over them."

But if you really want to see people go crazy, she adds, come on the third weekend of the month, when everything under $100 in the Half Off Room is marked down an additional 50 percent.

"People are lined up at the door before we open. It's like Filene's Basement Running of the Brides."

**

Cottage Two, where consignment happens seven days a week, is where you'll find the classic high-end goods: vintage jewelry, fine silver, crystal, marble-top tables, hand-knotted rugs and, today, a tufted velvet settee and an antique gargoyle armchair that calls to mind *Game of Thrones*.

Next door at Cottage Three: ceramic and hand-carved elephants, Oriental furniture, reclaimed ceiling tiles, copper tea kettles, bamboo animal print side chairs, and two life-sized wooden mermaids nestled among a wicker wonderland that would send any porch-loving Southerner in search of the nearest glass of iced tea.

The warehouse, packed with floor-to-ceiling furniture, is fun to navigate. But today, per usual, the Half Off Room in Cottage One draws the biggest crowd.

"Hey, Gay!" hoots a blue-haired lady to her friend.

"Yes?"

"Over here. You've got to get this picture for Rich."

Gay titters, making her way toward her friend. "What is it?"

"Cowboys."

"Oh, geez," Gay replies. "He'd put it in the living room."

They both cluck with laughter.

"Please don't tell him you found that," she adds politely.

**

My eye's on a cement garden heron in the courtyard between Cottages One and Two. I don't need it. But if I really want it, may be best to buy now before my fellow can talk me out of it.

Our spy, senior editor Ashley Wahl, is prone to wander.

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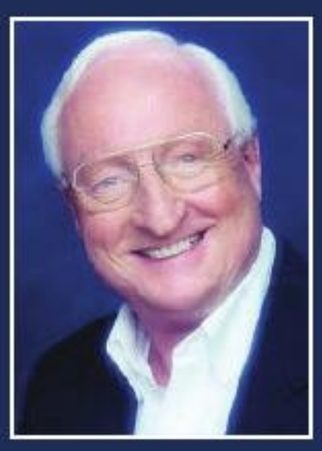

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Funny Boy

Have no fear, late night is here

By Gwenyfar Rohler

"Politics is pop. Our job as comedians – especially me, as a late-night talk show, which is a broader audience – is to amplify what we think America is thinking." – Jimmy Fallon

"Jonathan (Schwartz) is the only person I have ever met who is maybe more passionate about late-night TV than I am."

Wills Maxwell, Jr. grins and adds, "It's a lot of pitching – he's one of the sharpest people I've ever met in my life. I pitch something and then Jonathan is like, 'Change these two words to this,' and it's an infinitely better joke. He has the ability to see things in a really unique way, and he finds the joke in everything."

Though he's talking about his sidekick on his late-night talk show *Late Fear* at Dead Crow Comedy Room, Maxwell tells us much more about himself than he realizes. Because, aside from his perceptive insights about people, part of Maxwell's charm is his naturally self-effacing personality and his wonderful ability to collaborate with others.

"We started with the intention of just going to focus on comedy and make the show as funny as possible," Maxwell recounts. But as the pair continued working on monologue jokes, a recurring theme of addressing the way people react to him as a black man and Jonathan as a Jewish man began to emerge. "We're going to talk about it because it's going on in our lives," Maxwell confirms. Indeed, late-night talk shows have long pushed the envelope on such topics, and perhaps it is Maxwell's love of the form that allows him to explore these themes. "But the main goal of the show is always to be funny."

Even outside of *Late Fear,* Maxwell has a quirky look at life that is creative and funny. For their first film or play, most people opt for a boy-meets-girl coming-of-age story or a family crisis plot. Not Maxwell. While a film student at UNCW, he wrote his first film, *Soul Muzak*, about an elevator music composer trying to land his dream contract of composing the muzak for a skyscraper. "It's very clearly a freshman film attempt," Maxwell grins. "That was a fun character to write. He's just happy about where his life was at and people don't get it. They don't get what is so great about writing elevator muzak."

Though he ultimately pursued a filmmaking degree, hosting a late-night talk show has always been the real dream. "I tried to do it when I was at UNCW, but I couldn't get the support for it. Then I started to come to Nutt Street [the defunct comedy club] – and I was just getting ready to pitch the idea for it at Nutt Street when we closed the doors. So I put it way on the back burner . . . kept doing everything we could to keep doing comedy in Wilmington . . . keep that going."

Maxwell's introduction to standup comedy occurred on the very last day of high school at the school talent show, and once he got a taste he was hooked. Not that it was a surprise: Writing jokes instead of taking notes in class was standard for him. "For a while I made a habit of writing 'Top Ten' lists. Like Letterman . . . and passing them around the class for people to read." So when Timmy Sherrill opened Dead Crow Comedy Room, Maxwell was ecstatic and immediately wanted to do his long-dreamed-of talk show there. The pitch to Sherrill went something like this: "I've got this idea we can do it at midnight and live-stream it!"

Sherrill and co-owner Cole Craven greenlighted the project, and in August of last year, *Late Fear* premiered. "It was a very ambitious push with the live stream and doing it weekly," Maxwell admits. "So now we've slowed down a lot with doing it every other week and recording it. Even back when I came up with the original idea to do talk show, I wanted to do something to showcase Wilmington. It's a small town, but there are so many talented people here and it's a really strong arts community, so I just wanted to create another platform where we can say every week, 'Hey, this is Wilmington. Look at all the people we have here and look at what they are doing.'"

To that end, every week features a different musical guest, sketches, updates about artists and happenings around town, and also politics. "We talk about the film incentive a lot bsecause it's close to me," Maxwell admits. After graduation, he got production office jobs on a couple of films before the incentive went away. Now he's working as a janitor to pay the bills and produce his show. "I came to Wilmington to go to school and I just liked it here so I'm trying to stay."

Find *Late Fear* with Wills Maxwell on Facebook at www.facebook.com/latefear.

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

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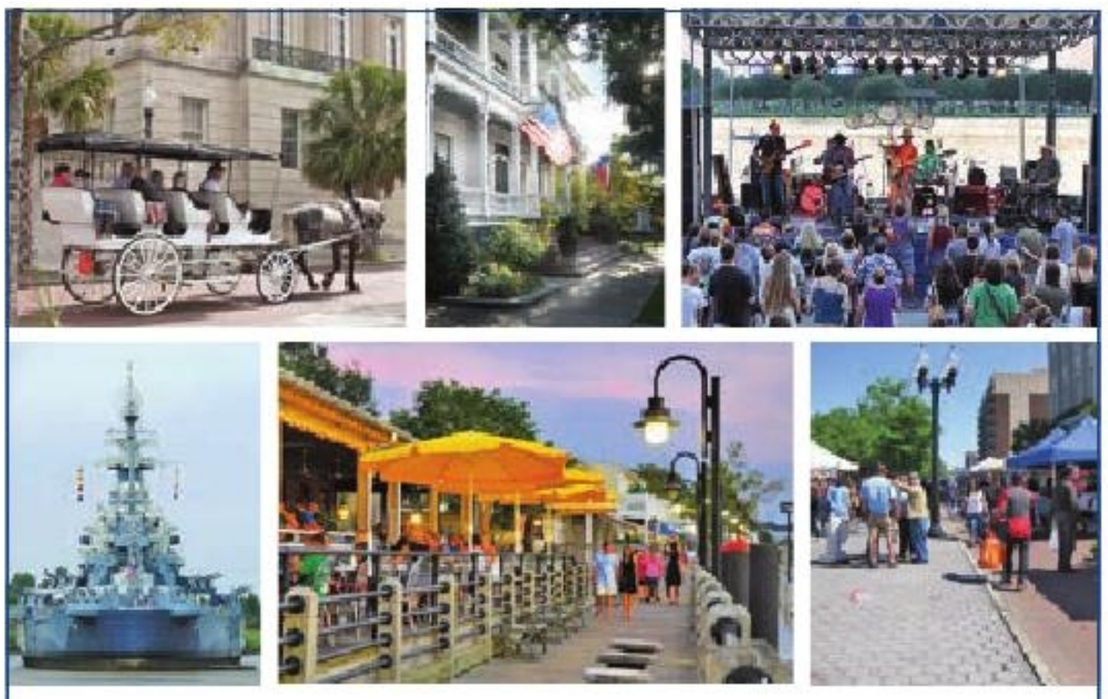

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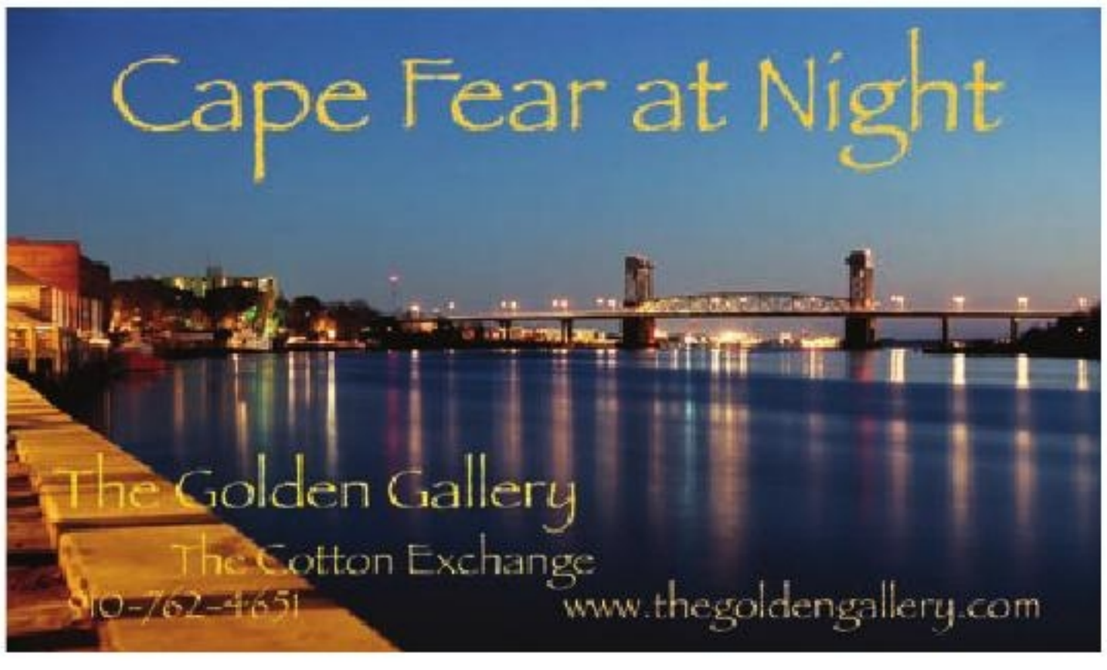

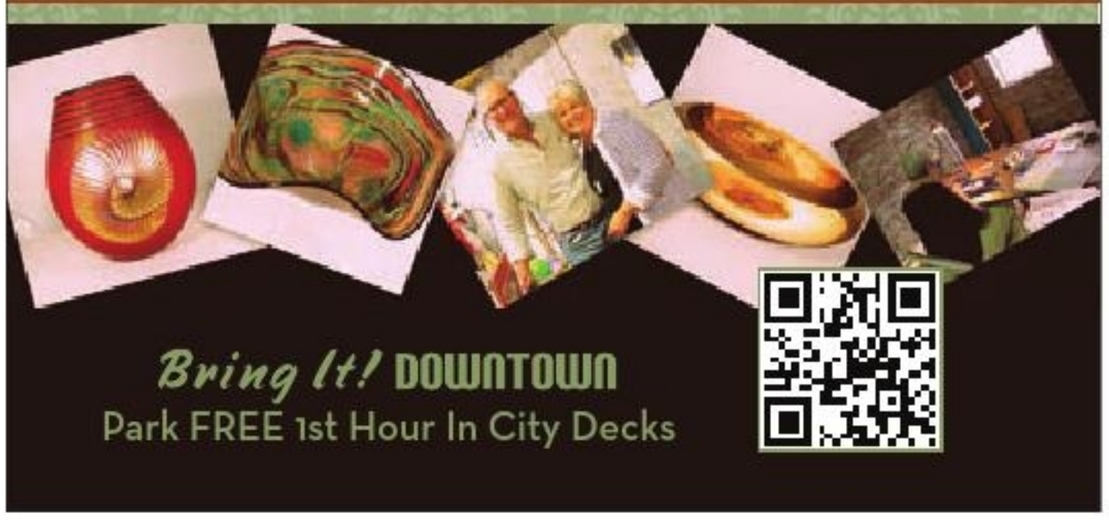

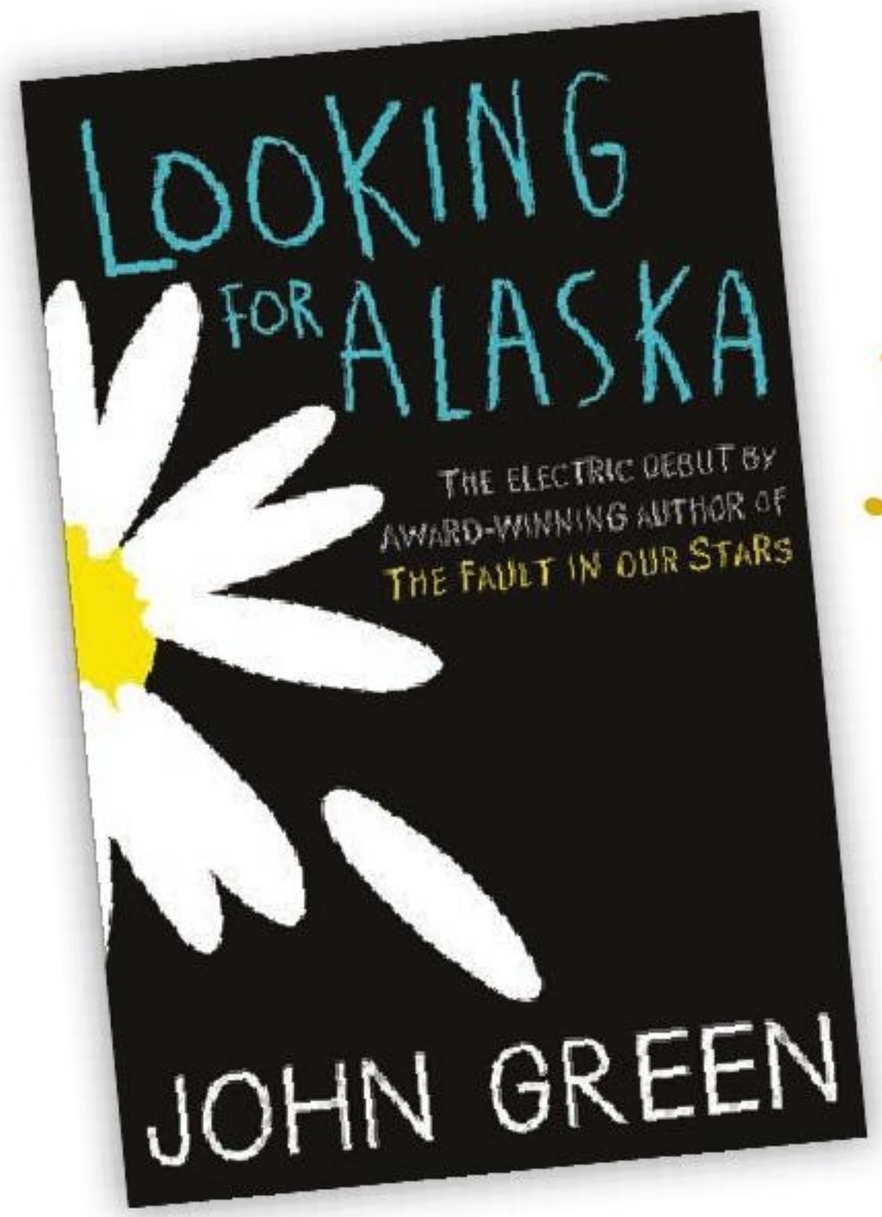

Why John Green Matters

Go ask your pre-teen children

By Brian Lampkin

Perhaps you've never heard of the writer John Green. If you don't have children in the preteen through 18-year-old range, then chances are good that John Green is entirely off your radar. You're speeding through your adult life without a backward glance and missing out on someone who may very well be changing the future. He's certainly affecting your sons' and daughters' (or grandsons' and granddaughters') present in dramatic and powerful ways. It's time to pay attention.

Looking for Alaska was Green's first book. Like most first books, at first no one noticed. Green tells the story of his initial book tour on which he sometimes found himself reading to an audience of two. *Looking for Alaska* was, however, an immediate success with critics. (It won the Printz Award from the American Library Association for best Young Adult novel.) And it eventually found its audience. Ten years later, he's the most popular young adult writer in America and thousands attend readings and literally millions watch his YouTube videos.

What is so special about John Green, and about *Looking for Alaska* in particular? I asked my preteen twin daughters that question. Their answers are stunning, but first let me give you a rough outline of the novel. Alaska is a junior at a boarding school in Alabama who has faced significant tragedy in her life. She is vibrant and alive in ways that are frankly too much for the high school boys around her. The book centers on her relationship with her two best friends, Pudge (a fictional stand-in for Green) and the Colonel, who both love her as best they can ("love" for Green is multidimensional and not just the romantic love of so much teen fiction), but feel they have failed her in the end.

The novel, through Alaska, asks this question: "How will we ever get out of this labyrinth of suffering?" And there's no small amount of suffering in the book. And there's sex. And a lot of cigarette smoking and underage drinking. The novel is a censor's dream, and many a school librarian has faced difficult questions from outraged parents or, more often, outraged organizations offended by the idea of the book. But Green has always had a deep respect for the real lives of teenagers. He knows that sex and death and all the things in between are central concerns of teenagers and there's no use in pretending otherwise.

And my young daughters are grateful: "He makes me feel like I can handle things. I know bad things happen in the world, but now I know I can get through them," says one daughter. To this parent, that sounds like a gift John Green has handed her. And her language is revealing. She knows bad things happen. Green isn't telling her anything new; like most children, she is acutely aware of the fact of bad things happening in the world. Grandparents die, parents die, siblings die, abductions, wars, bullying, stress: the world is full of suffering and no teenager is immune from it.

Like most parents I want to protect my children from all of it and am tempted to avoid talking about any of it with them, but John Green won't let me. While in the middle of reading his most recent novel, *The Fault In Our Stars*, my other preteen daughter said to me, "Dad, you know I'm going to die." That's a heart-stopping moment for any parent and my immediate response was to push the idea aside — to get the idea out of her head by insisting otherwise: "That's silly, honey, you're not going to die . . ." Except, of course she's right. It wasn't an existential crisis for her or an immediate concern for her safety; it was an acknowledgment of the fact of life and a desire to talk about it with her father. My gratitude to Green is immense. He is giving language and public space to a topic we want to wall off because it's

too difficult to address, but we do our wise and wonderful children a disservice by denying what they desperately want to talk about.

"I read him and I feel like I've accomplished something important," my daughter added. And that sense of self-worth — "I've accomplished something important" — is also priceless. Readers of Green feel respected; they feel like they're being treated like competent, thinking people who are capable of dealing with life and all its joys and sorrows. It is wrong to think that Green's books are primarily about suffering. There is so much authentic love — often between teens, but just as often between parents and their children — and also a great deal of "radical hope."

There are many big ideas in *Looking for Alaska*. Green includes Rabelais' search for "the Great Perhaps" as a central motif and Alaska is an astute reader of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and other serious writers. Don't get me wrong: video games, fried burritos, McDonald's, hair gel and other preoccupations of teenage life are also well represented, but Green is really trying to write about this idea of radical hope. In his introduction to the 10th anniversary edition, Green writes:

"I wanted to write a novel about love and suffering and forgiveness, a novel of what in the study of religion is called 'radical hope,' the idea that hope is available to all of us at all times, even unto — and after — death."

And my children, like so many others, are tuned to that hope in Green's books. *The Fault In Our Stars* is about children dying from cancer, true, but it is also a guide to how to live with deep love and grace and conviction and, yes, hope. I would be unaware of John Green if it weren't for my children. In fact, my daughter insisted I read *The Fault In Our Stars* and I resisted and resisted until I finally saw just how important it was to her. So, I recommend it for you and your children, but whatever you do, don't tell your children to read John Green. You'll ruin it for them. They have to find him on their own. If anything, tell them they cannot, under any circumstances, ever read that offensive and vulgar book *Looking for Alaska*. Then leave it lying around the house.

Green's other novels include *An Abundance of Katherines*, *Paper Towns* (soon to be a movie) and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*. His video blog (www.youtube.com/user/vlogbrothers), with his brother Hank Green, is the best reason to venture into the netherworld of YouTube. The Green brothers make passionate pleas for intellectualism for teenagers, embrace "Nerd Fighters" (people who fight for the respect and dignity of nerds, so-called) and remind everyone to DFTBA. Look it up.

Brian Lampkin is an owner of Greensboro's Scuppernong Books.

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A Tale of Two Daddies

And a Cuban sandwich with a kick

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Dana Sachs

Not long ago, when Will Wilkinson's daughter, Amber, wanted to show one of her books to fellow kindergarteners at school, her request inspired a brief but anxious discussion between her parents.

"What do we do?" Will asked his husband, Ben Rose. The book, *A Tale of Two Daddies*, focused on a family with same-sex parents, just like Amber's. "Should we ask the teachers first?"

"No," Ben replied. "The kids in her class know about our family."

"Do we need to prepare them?"

"I think they're ready."

As it turned out, Amber's classmates were more than ready, and their interest in the book did not even center on the theme of gay parenting. "What kinds of questions did they ask?" Will inquired when Amber got home.

"They asked me when I got it," his daughter said, "and I told them I got it for Christmas."

The fact that children today can be so blasé about same-sex parenting demonstrates how far we've come since 2004, when a group of Wilmington parents complained about school libraries carrying *King and King*, a children's book about two princes who fall in love. Last year, a federal court ruling allowed gay couples to marry in North Carolina, and Will and Ben, who first wed in California in 2008, are now legally married here at home. They're raising two 5-year-olds, Amber and her brother, Kamaree, and they temporarily foster other local kids who need a family to care for them.

Will and I got together at Blue Surf Café, the popular ocean-themed spot on Racine that connects an ideal of healthy living with a menu focused on fresh ingredients. Even if patrons are, like Will, less likely to head to the beach after lunch than go back to their offices at UNCW (Will runs the university's Writing Center), the restaurant's sunny décor and ride-the-big-one mantra — "Surf. Eat. Repeat." — can make you feel like you chase waves, even if you don't.

Will is tall and lean, with blue eyes perfectly suited to the restaurant's ocean-hued palette. He's a regular at Blue Surf, not just because it's close to work, but also because he loves their Cuban sandwich, which adds sliced turkey to the traditional ham and Swiss and then, for extra kick, includes a slathering of house-made shallot-and-cilantro-laden Sriracha mayo. This dressing shows up in other sandwiches as well. It adds balance to the sweetness of the mango salsa that tops the grilled mahi on ciabatta. The dressing also gives a satisfying jolt to the meatloaf, a 16-ingredient extravaganza served on a brioche and topped with bacon, cheddar, arugula and red onion. Though the meatloaf is presented much like a hamburger, "it doesn't taste like a traditional burger at all," Will pointed out. "It has a tang to it."

As a kid, Will told me, he expected to grow up and start a family, though, he added, laughing, "I was always kind of vague on the 'Mommy' part of that." Once he came out as gay in college, "I sort of stopped defining my life in terms of parenthood." Having children seemed less likely for him at that point.

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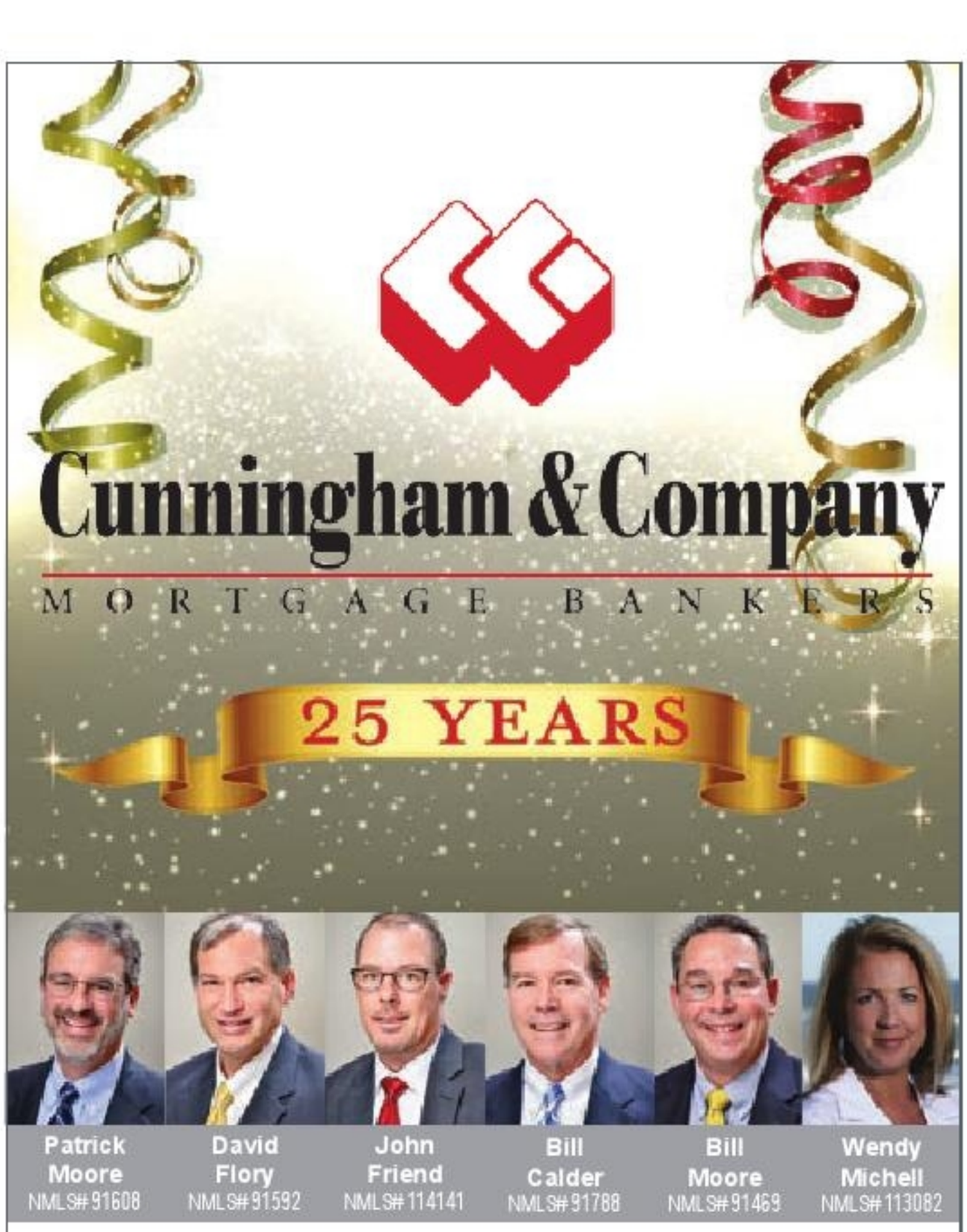

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Then, in 2001, Will fell in love with Ben. After they got married, the two of them began to talk about having children. "We decided that what was best for us was to be a foster family and hope some of those kids might stick." In 2009, they completed a foster care training program with the New Hanover County Department of Social Services. They received their license in June and, a week later, got a call that a 3-month-old boy needed care.

Most parents have months to prepare for the arrival of a baby. Will and Ben had less than a day. "You don't have a baby shower when you foster," Will said, but they got support from a large circle of friends and family, who brought over diapers, baby clothes, toys and a crib.

The next morning, Will and Ben met the little boy, Kamaree, and drove him directly to a pediatrician's office for a checkup. Sitting in the waiting room, baby in his arms, Will told me, he fell in love. "I can still close my eyes and see that moment when he smiled. My heart melted. I don't have biological kids, but I can't imagine a moment that's stronger than that."

Six months after Kamaree arrived, they brought home another child who needed fostering, an infant girl named Amber. Will and Ben have since adopted both children. The process was not a simple one, and for good reason, too. "The foster system, as it should, privileges biological connections," Will explained. It wasn't until after it became certain that their biological families could not care for them — which took several years — that Will and Ben finalized the adoptions. During this time they've also fostered five other children, including a little girl who lived with them for a year and a half before a member of her biological family adopted her. "That was the hardest," said Will, because he and Ben had hoped to adopt the girl themselves. "But it was the best thing for her."

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Despite the fact that North Carolina has been slow to warm to gay marriage, Will's family "has really been supported by this community." Not only are Will and Ben same-sex parents, but Kamaree is African American, Amber is Hispanic, and both dads are white, which means the family is multiracial, too.

"We so often have strangers come up and say, 'Your family is so beautiful,'" Will said. Although there are occasional hostile looks and stares, "by and large people are either ignoring us or being wonderful."

One natural component of adoption is the grief that children suffer due to the loss of their biological families, and Ben and Will help their children navigate through that. "They still ask about their moms," Will said. "We tell them their moms loved them and wanted them but couldn't be their parents. And we loved them and wanted them and could."

As for having gay parents, Will told me, Amber and Kamaree respond to their dads in a way that feels familiar to him. "They gag when we give each other a kiss," he told me. "But I did that, too, with my parents." Some challenges are universal.

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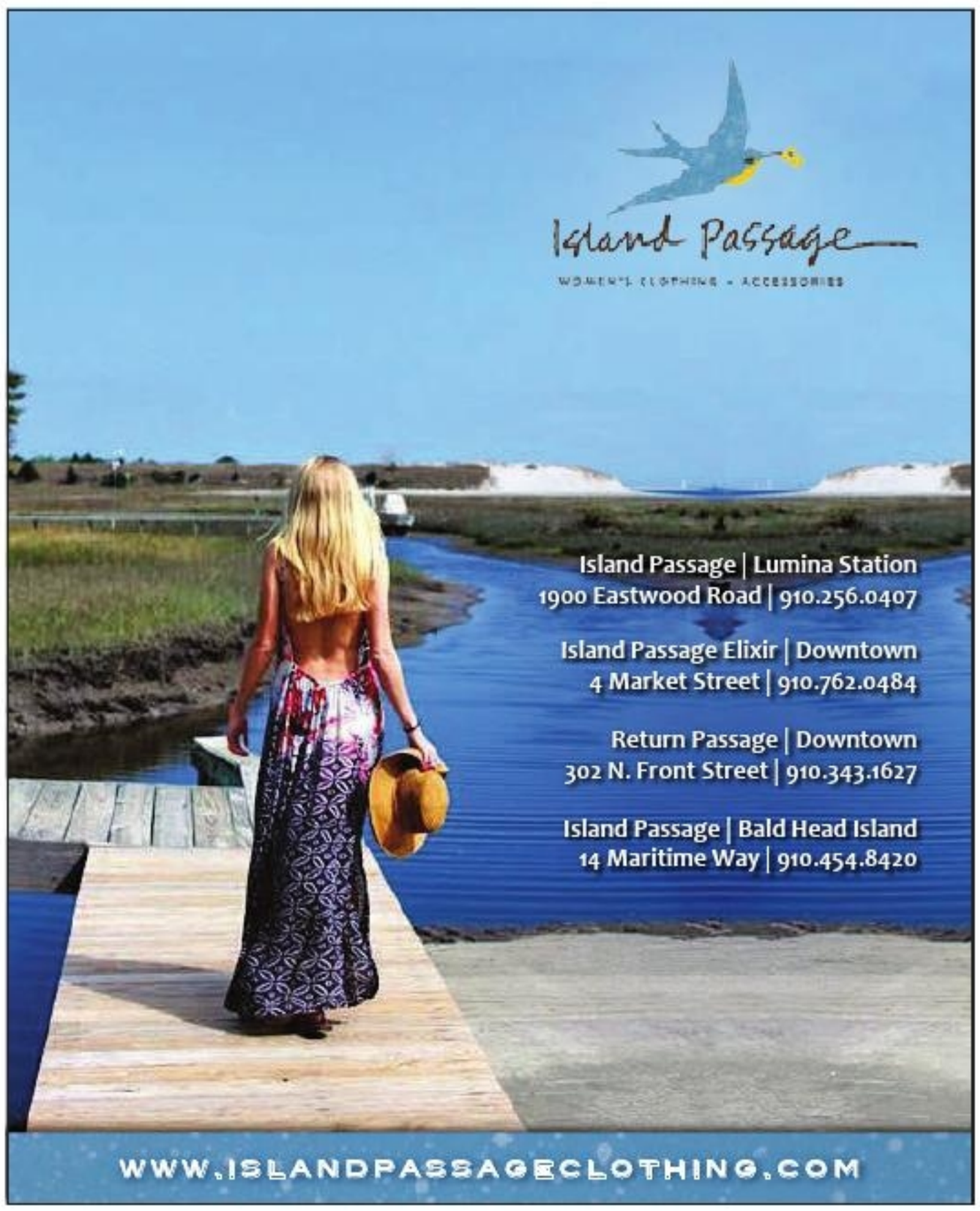
Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*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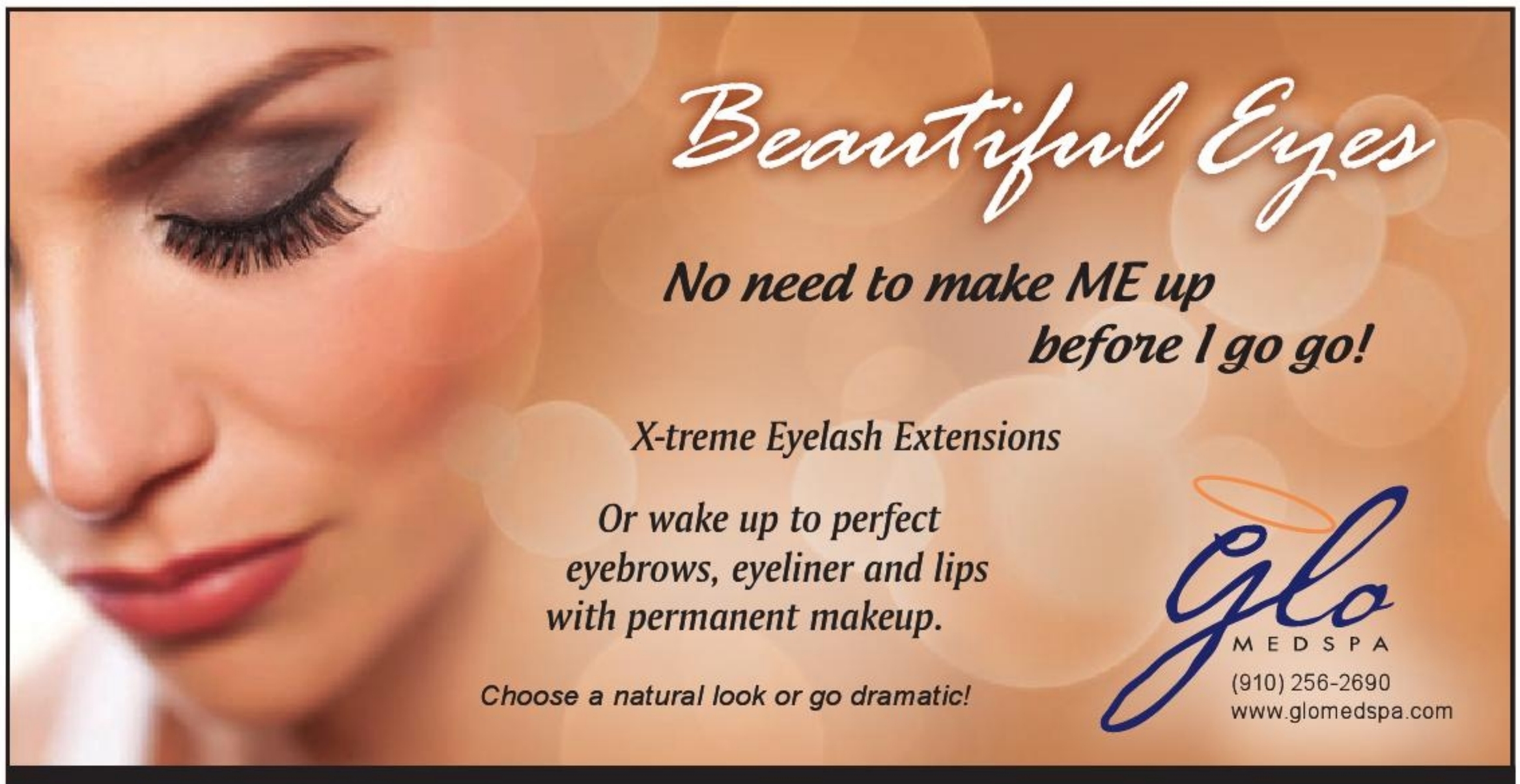
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Tommy Mills, Little Pond Caterers

Meatball nights and a chef in the vanguard of Wilmington's foodie Renaissance

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Jason Frye

It started with a question uttered in the chill of an October-in-Cape-Cod sea breeze: "Can you cook?"

Tommy Mills shifts in his chair thinking of that autumn day decades gone. He'd spent the summer framing houses along the thin curve of Massachusetts' Cape Cod shore and was facing a winter doing the same, driving nails in the driving winds of Provincetown, Wellfleet, Chatham. When the question "Can you cook?" reached his ears, he envisioned a flame-ringed gas burner and felt the heat of the kitchen calling him.

"I didn't know if I could cook, but I said, 'Sure I can. I'll give it a try,'" Mills says. "Turned out I was good at it."

"Good at it" is Mills' way of downplaying how good he really is. It doesn't belie his classical culinary training at Baltimore International College, studies with chef Peter Timmins, externship in Ireland, the lessons learned that first winter at the Wursthaus on Cape Cod, and subsequent seasons at a HoJo in Burlington, Vermont. And it doesn't even begin to touch on his popularity here in Wilmington.

"I loved HoJo. I cooked, I snowboarded, I lived in a beautiful town. Burlington was the perfect place for me at the time. Phish used to play at our house. Ben and Jerry had just opened their first place. There were artists and hippies and ski bums. Burlington had this energy about it, like it was all about to happen," he says. "Wilmington has a similar vibe."

Mills has been cooking here in Wilmington for more than two decades. That's long enough to see the population double and to watch the culinary scene evolve into what it is today. It's also long enough to know that Wilmington's had this on-the-cusp feel for a while.

"You can feel it, right? We're almost there, Wilmington's on the doorstep. You've got manna (restaurant) and their AAA Four-Diamond award — that's a huge deal — Keith (Rhodes) on *Top Chef* and with the (James) Beard accolades, and so many chefs stretching and putting out some really good food. Downtown, you finally have breweries and taprooms opening up; Palate is a beautiful place with some interesting beer and wine selections. All of these chefs and restaurants and bars are reviving Wilmington."

After he says this, he's silent for a moment, ruminating on "reviving."

"Maybe it's not reviving Wilmington. Maybe it's injecting some energy into Wilmington," he amends.

"Take Asheville. We should be Asheville by the sea. They're what, 20,000, maybe 25,000 residents smaller than Wilmington? And their food

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scene is on the national stage? Why? Why is there such an electric feel about Asheville?" He lets this question hang there before answering. "I think it's because everything is concentrated in their downtown and in that concentration, you get energy and excitement.

"What Wilmington needs is that growth, that packed center. We grew, but we sprawled, we spread out too much and lost that center. Now, though, it seems that downtown is about to come full circle. Folks want to be downtown to eat and grab a cocktail and get a beer. It's shifting to be less about college students and more about the long-term residents. In many ways, downtown is slowly becoming a community again."

A sense of community is at the heart of what Mills does every day. He left the restaurant kitchen behind years ago so he could focus on catering. He's cooked for weddings, private parties, events, fundraisers and functions of every size, and at every one of these, the focus is on the communal nature of food.

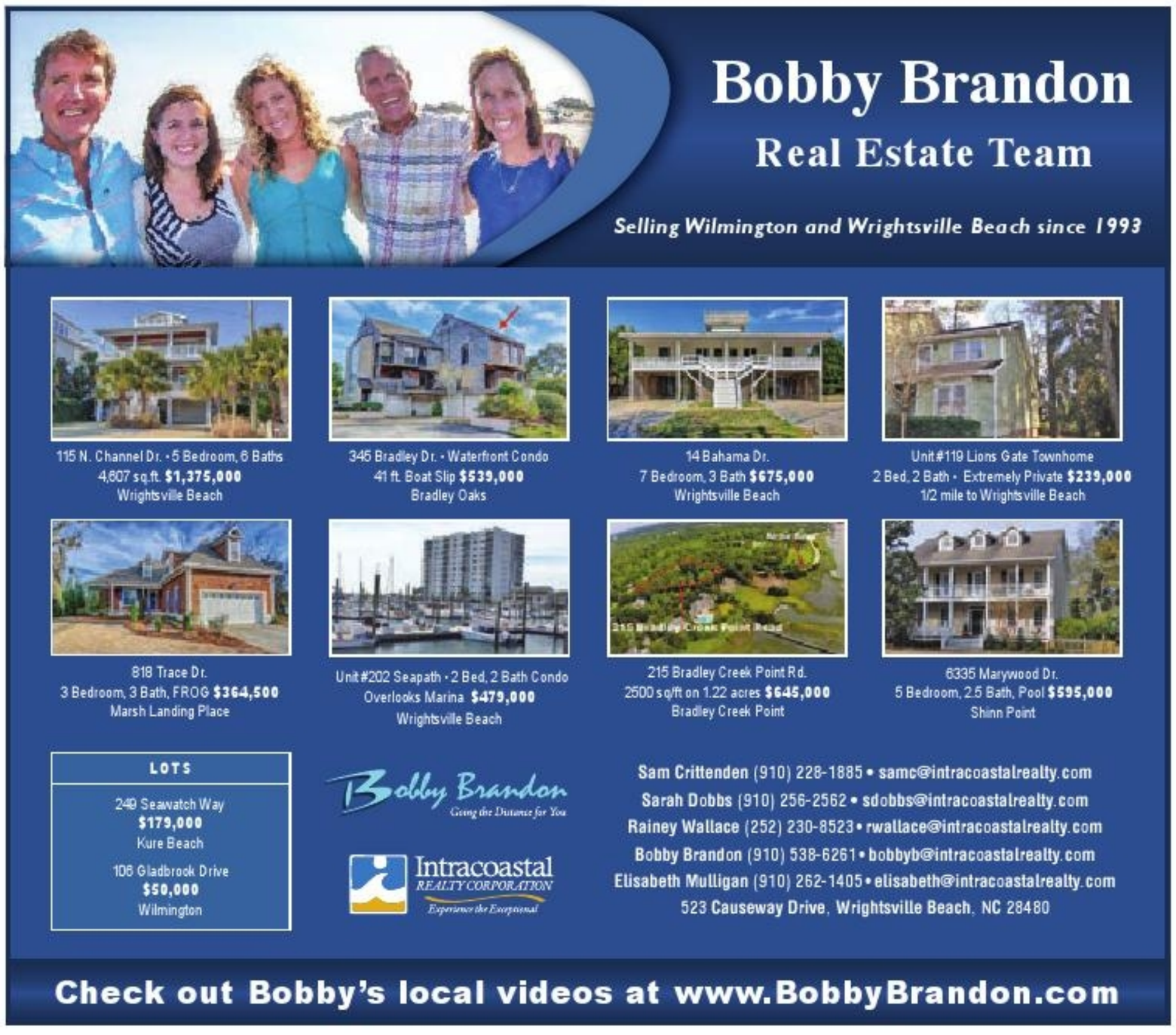
What's more communal than food? We talk about it when we see it. We talk about it after we eat it. We swap recipes and give recommendations on where to eat and what to get. We talk about our grandmothers, about meals we had on vacation, about what we cooked last night. Food is, and has always been, a centerpiece for us.

That's why Mills started Meatball Tuesday a couple of years ago. If you don't know Meatball Tuesday, you should. For starters, it has a great name, but the food's even better. Every Tuesday at The Front Room, the little event space Mills carved out of his catering kitchen on Princess Place, he serves meatballs and more to a pretty packed house. He serves from 6 p.m. until he runs out of food, so die-hards know to get there early so they don't leave hungry.

"With Meatball Tuesday I wanted to do something for the community. I wanted folks to come together and eat in a more family-style setting."

Mills doesn't mean family-style in that a big heaping bowl of meatballs is plopped in the center of the table, then it's a mad scramble to grab a serving or two; it's family-style in that you're seated at long tables and when you look around, you may not know the people to your left or right or across from you. Then your food arrives — meatball grinders, salads, maybe a chicken pot pie or fried chicken or pork Milanese — and, between bites, conversation occurs and community is created.

"What I love about cooking is the party; it's not a question of food for me," he says. "I have high standards and I cook to them, so food's not the thrill. The thrill is bringing people together."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Recipe

Chef Mills adapted this recipe from his father's wife. The couple lives in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and helped develop Mills' love for Latin cuisine. This dish is inexpensive and filling ("$10 at La Huerta will feed a party or a teenager," he says), and serves as a fantastic side to accompany a number of proteins.

Moros y Cristianos (black beans and white rice)

Serves 8

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large white onion, diced
2 green bell peppers, seeded and diced
2 tablespoons chopped garlic (4–6 cloves)
3 serrano chilies, seeded and chopped small (can sub jalapeños or a hotter pepper, if preferred)
10 plum tomatoes, diced
2 tablespoons cumin seed, toasted
3 tablespoons thyme
2 bay leaves (easy to remove later)
2 cups long-grain white rice
2 15-oz. cans black beans, drained and rinsed
3 1/2 cups chicken or vegetable broth, or water
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1 tablespoon salt
1/2 tablespoon black pepper
Pinch of white or raw sugar

Add 2 tablespoons olive oil to a heavy bottomed sauce pan and set at medium heat.

Add the onion, garlic, bell peppers and chilies, and cook until soft — about 10 minutes.

Stir in tomatoes, cumin, thyme and bay leaves, then cook for 5 minutes.

Add rice, beans, broth and vinegar.

Bring to a boil over high heat, then cover and reduce to low heat. Cook until the rice is tender, about 20–25 minutes.

Uncover and let the beans and rice rest for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork and serve.

Top with a piece of fish, chicken or carved meat. Adorn with aioli or a spritz of lime — and there you have it.

Note: If you want to scale up, watch the tomatoes as they will give off a lot of liquid, so you may need to reduce the amount of broth you add to cook the rice.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of Moon North Carolina *and* Moon NC Coast. *He's a barbecue judge, he rarely naps, and he's always on the road. Keep up with his travels at tarheeltourist.com.*

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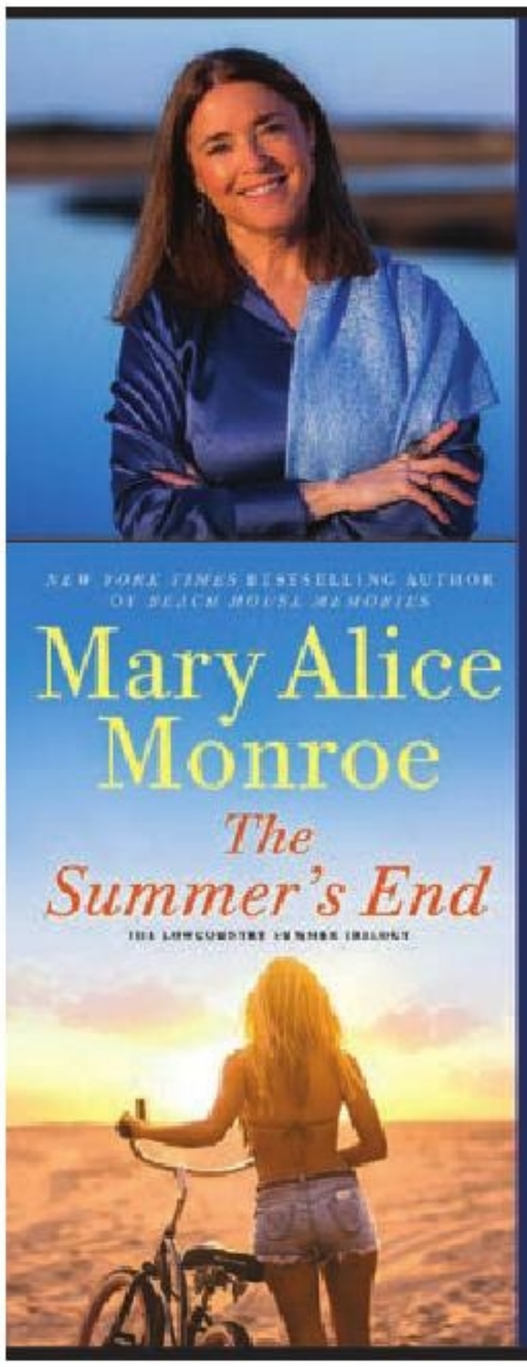

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The Garden Within

How a young girl gained her grit through the wandering vines of wisteria

KATHLEEN M. CAUSEY

This time of year, you can see it creeping alongside nearly every highway and back road in the South, its bluish-purple flowers dangling in thick grape-like masses, so fragrant they almost cover up the climbing shrub's insidious nature. Like pleated lace swag, it is beautiful, but it is likewise in constant search for a victim to climb upon, to slowly choke with its thick, malicious claws. Of course I'm talking about wisteria, although for years I thought it was called crepe (as in "grape") myrtle, the other oft-loved and taunted Belle of every Southern gardener. But that's another story.

This is a story about my introduction to the two Southern sisters who became my neighbors when I moved to town at 13, the age when you start to become aware of people in your life and how they affect you. Mrs. Hughes was a widow. She was gracious and giving, truly the epitome of a Southern woman. Her voice was soft, always just above a whisper, and I recall spending hours listening to her stories of the neighborhood, her children and loving husband. She was frail, and I knew even then that there were probably not many years ahead for her. Yet she emulated a beauty that radiated through the wrinkles and the liver spots on the back of her hand. To this day, I still smile when I think about her.

Living next door to this lovely neighbor was a woman named Viola Miller, who claimed to be her sister. Though there were many differences, both physical and emotional, between my own sister and me, there just didn't seem to be any possible connection between these two siblings. Viola was harsh — in looks, voice and disposition. It seemed she would find any reason to raise her voice, so we were careful not to cross her path. With black hair and dark piercing eyes, she was like the wicked witch; her sister, the fairy godmother in my mind. I remember hearing the adults whisper how, on her husband's death, he had finally found his peace and quiet.

**

No doubt our clump of wisteria growing up the tree near the street had originated from Mrs. Hughes' yard. Its vines were choking the life out of the tree it had ensnared, and its mass was an obstruction for Mrs. Hughes as she backed out of her drive. One Saturday morning, my father instructed my sister and me to pull up every single vine in the yard before his return that evening.

My sister and I were old enough to know what was expected of us when my father gave an order — and we knew exactly what would happen to us if it wasn't done on time. By now, he never needed to threaten us with the added "or else." I had acquired my stepfather around the age of 9. His Southern backwoods upbringing was not against a good lashing when a child didn't listen, and we knew all too well the feel of that inch-and-three-quarters leather belt across our thighs, and the mark of shame we carried for days afterward.

Looking down at the vines that were hiding beneath the yard, my sister and I knew we were in for a full day of torture. And so it went; we would cut a vine near the tree and pull as we crossed the yard back to the house. Soon the yard looked like a plough had been through it; grass turned over and dark earth showing beneath.

Nothing ever happened in a neighborhood like ours that everyone didn't see or hear, so before long, both sisters came over to see what we were doing to our yard. The obvious signs of disgust couldn't be hidden from their faces, and they begged us to stop. We were simply obeying our father's orders, we told them, expressing our fear of punishment if we didn't finish. The sisters exchanged hushed words among themselves, shaking their heads before disappearing indoors.

We were still working feverishly when we heard our father's truck pull into the street. With tears in our eyes, we looked at the ground: For each root we pulled, there seemed to be two or three just underneath. Our hearts raced as we heard his door shut, and we waited breathlessly as he came around the drive. As he approached to take stock in our progress, a shrill voice caused us to look in the direction of Viola's house. She flew down the stairs of her porch and raced toward my father, her eyes black with rage, until she stood within a foot of his nose. To my astonishment, I actually saw my father cower. Viola's voice was harsh with fire and brimstone as she laid a barrage of insults on him; she showed him our bloody hands and chided him for treating young women like field hands. Childlike and cautious, my father quietly accepted Viola's punishment. He even apologized to her. I stood there, shocked, in disbelief. Had my father really backed down without a fight? Without getting in the last word? This wasn't what I expected; my father was feared by everyone — men, women, and especially children! I watched as she huffed one last time and turned to stalk back to her lair.

With patience and time, I learned to appreciate this woman I once thought was so hateful. I realized she had the mind and heart of a man but was born into the body of a woman. She probably wanted to go off to war, but ended up marrying the first man who would have her. She never had children, and I'll never know whether that was intentional or not. I remember sitting with her after her sister died and still marveling at the differences between the two. I like to think that Mrs. Hughes taught me Southern female charm and Viola taught me the value of a good fight. They both taught this Chicago-born girl how to become a true GRITS (Girl Raised In The South); for that I am forever grateful.

I now own the house that once belonged to my parents and still fight the battle with my neighbor's wandering Wisteria vines. And as I struggle to pull them up, I will never forget the day a beast became a beauty in my eyes.

Kathleen M. Causey is a North Carolina native whose career with the federal government took her overseas for 16 years. She currently lives in Seven Lakes, North Carolina (the wisteria is thriving!) and recently launched her own consulting business, Cyber Technology Training & Consulting, LLC.

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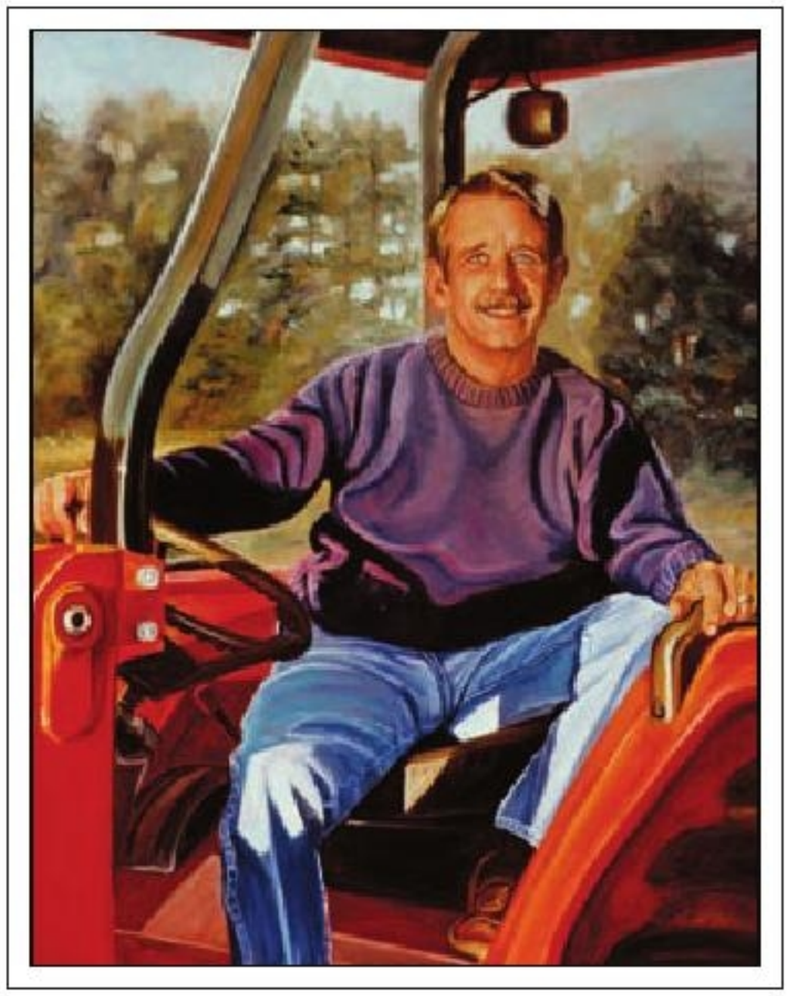

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Red Knot

The largest of peeps, these colorful shorebirds are hard to find

By Susan Campbell

Along our beaches and nearby wetlands there are dozens of shorebirds that one could tick off during the course of a year. The smallest of these are referred to as "peeps": birds with rounded bodies, long, dark legs, thin bills, and some pattern of light and dark feathering. They are typically found together in small groups with others of their kind — or at least other peeps.

Differences between species are subtle, and many consider peeps the most challenging group to master. Poor lighting and lack of magnification will render them impossible to identify. But one need not be an expert birder to spot a red knot. These birds are the largest of peeps and, in spring, one of the most colorful shorebirds in our area.

It is finding a red knot that is the challenge. These shorebirds migrate along our coast in both spring and fall with small numbers overwintering here each year. But they are so few and far between now that it is a very good day in the field when I happen upon a flock. These birds were clearly in decline when I moved to North Carolina in the late '80s. It had less to do with habitat changes here than it did with the management of horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay. As it happens, horseshoe crabs produce immense quantities of eggs in the spring. The timing of their spawning coincides with the knots' migratory stop in May. In fact, it is estimated that over 90 percent of the population will be in the vicinity, along the bayshore of Delaware and New Jersey for several days each year, taking advantage of the abundance of high-protein food.

Historically, millions upon millions of these fascinating crustaceans lived and bred around the mouth of the river in Delaware Bay. But after years of persistent harvest, research suggested that horseshoe crab numbers were plummeting and, with them, the huge flocks of red knots. Although commercial fishing is now being regulated, it remains to be seen whether crab numbers will recover enough to result in a rebound in red knot numbers. The birds must now exert more energy in their annual quest to find enough eggs to fuel their non-stop flight to nesting grounds in the high Arctic. This is not an insignificant leg of the birds' journey of over 9,000 miles — one way!

Finding red knots used to be easy: One would simply look for a large group of good-sized shorebirds along any beach or dredge spoil island. Now, scanning these habitats at the right time of the year will result in a handful of birds, at best. Flocks roost above the high tide line, on one leg with their bills on their backs, tucked between their wings. Knots are active foragers, probing with their bills in the mud and sand, feeling for tiny mollusks and crustaceans. In extremely wet weather, they may also be seen in grassy areas feeding on worms and grubs.

Today, finding red knots is simply a matter of covering a lot of ground during their migration seasons (mid-April through May, and mid-September through October), or getting very lucky. Loafing individuals have been reported in both winter and summer as well. So the next time you are somewhere wet and come across even a few shorebirds — look closely. One or two could be red knots.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted by email at susan@ncaves.com.

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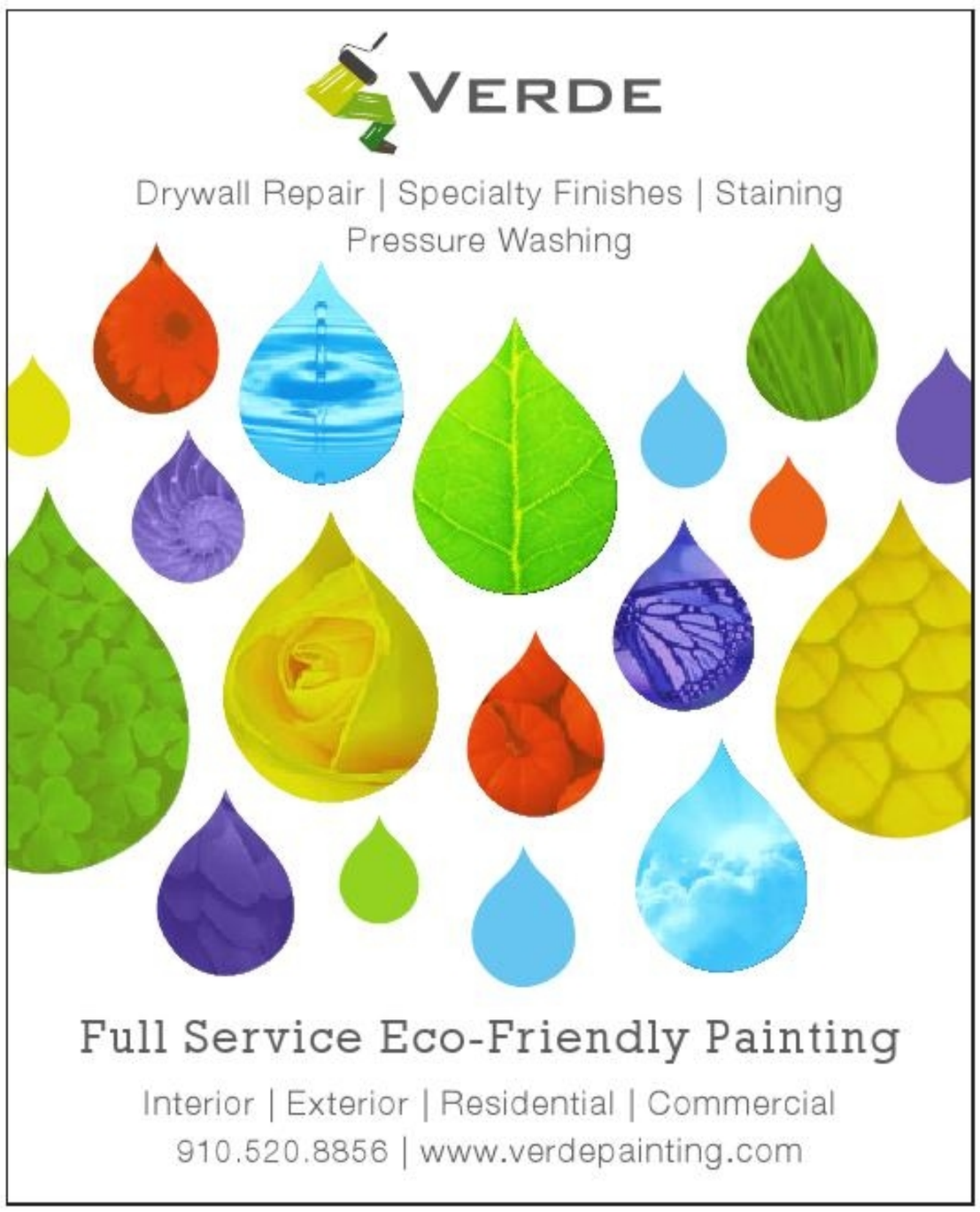
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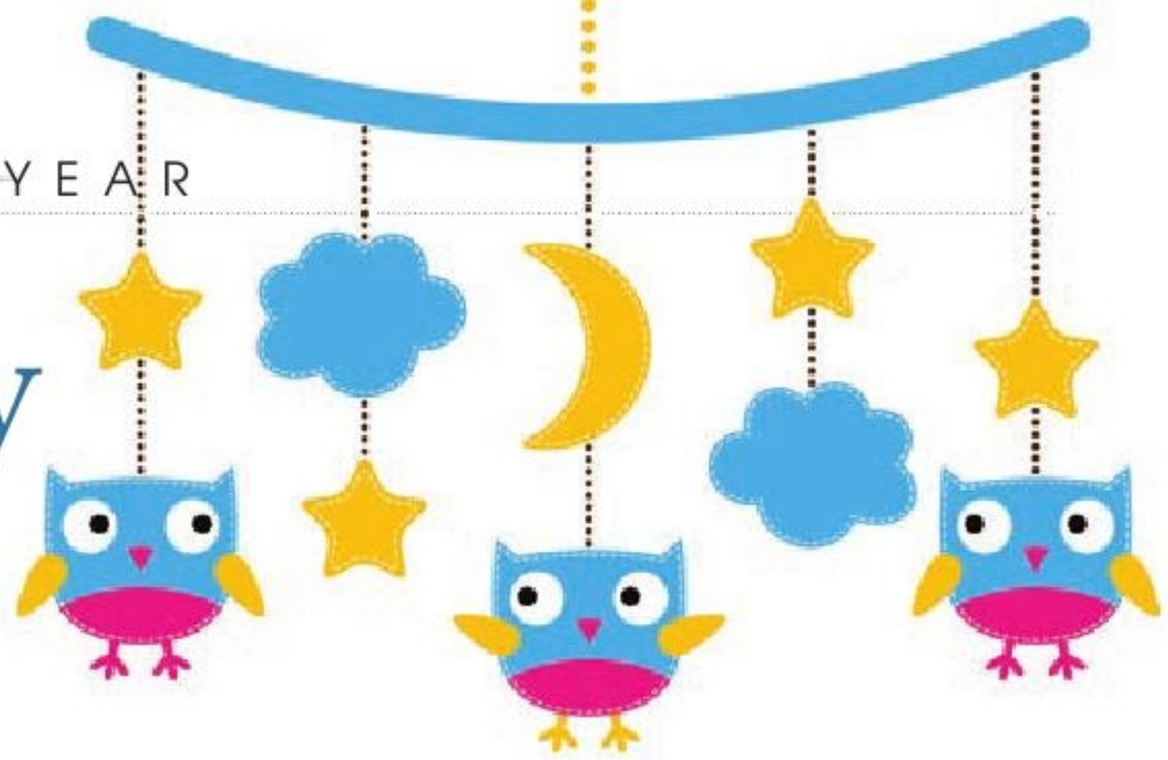
Modern(ist) Family

A hand reaches, a baby moves, and something is formed



By Wiley Cash

. . . a stone, a leaf, an unfound door; of a stone, a leaf, a door. And all of the forgotten faces. Naked and alone we came into exile. In her dark womb we did not know our mother's face; from the prison of her flesh have we come into the unspeakable and incommunicable prison of this earth.

—Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*

I am in bed with my wife, reading aloud from the opening pages of *Look Homeward, Angel*, Thomas Wolfe's 1929 autobiographical novel about a boy named Eugene Gant who struggles to understand the great mystery of life in a small mountain town. Although my wife is listening, I'm actually reading aloud so that our unborn child can learn the sound of my voice. We've been told it's important for our child to know our voices as soon as possible.

As I read, my wife flips through her iPad, investigating chairs for the nursery, trying to decide whether we should purchase one that glides and rocks *and* reclines. There is also the creeping fear that a new, better, safer option may be created by the time our child is born.

While I read, my eyes wander toward my wife's iPad where patterns and colors and different kinds of chairs fly by until her finger stops sliding, and I see what may be the ideal chair provided it glides or rocks and/or reclines. It's tan.

"I like that one," I say. What I mean is, *Can we buy it, and if we don't like it, can we burn it in the backyard as an offering to whatever awful gods control one's fate when searching baby furniture?*

"I like it too," my wife says. "Do you think it will match the paint?"

Oh, God, the paint. We still haven't chosen a color for the nursery, but I keep telling myself (and my wife) that everything—anything—looks great with tan, gray, pale blue and off-white. The nursery has become my struggle. Each day, when she walks in the door from work, my wife must witness another of my failed attempts to make some kind of progress in the 12-by-15-foot bedroom. Last week I broke down the double bed reserved for guests and moved it to the attic before carrying the mattress down the stairs to the garage, which means I oversaw its controlled fall down the stairs, where it came to a rest against the front door.

Once the room was empty of the bed I had a better idea of what we were working with, and I could finally give paint colors my full consideration. The pieces of a dark gray crib were collapsed in one corner like the bones of a tiny dinosaur. Scattered about were gender-neutral paint swatches and bags of baby clothes we'd somehow begun to accumulate. Also present were two boxes containing two sets of curtains we ordered online but haven't yet returned; we've somehow decided they don't match the paint we haven't yet selected.

I got to work and moved everything from the baby's room to the other guest room, and then I used painter's tape to stick the paint swatches to the walls.

My wife came home from work and found me in the baby's empty room, beaming with pride at my day's work. "This looks great," she said, offering me a genuine smile that may or may not have been tinged with pity. "Where's all the stuff that was in here?"

I told her that I'd moved it all to the guest room, and then she informed me that her sister and brother-in-law were coming to visit. I took one long look around the baby's empty room and imagined the walls painted a brilliant tan, gray, pale blue or off-white. And then I moved everything back.

But I left the swatches taped to the walls. Progress had been made.

The tan glider that probably rocks and may or may not recline has been saved in my wife's favorites, and I've gone back to reading aloud from *Look Homeward, Angel*. This is when I read the following line about Eugene's father, W.O., a stonecutter by trade: "He wanted to wreak something dark and unspeakable in him into cold stone." I know how W.O. feels. There's a dark thing inside me called fear, and with it is an unspeakable thing called uncertainty. I'm afraid of becoming a father, and I'm uncertain of what to do once I become one. I think my wife feels some version of these emotions as well. These feelings find outlet in the "cold stone" of the nursery, where we've begun to accumulate objects in an attempt to "wreak" this dark and unspeakable thing we're feeling into some kind of manifestation of preparedness.

And then it dawns on me that this is what Thomas Wolfe was trying to do in writing *Look Homeward, Angel*; he was starting with the abstract emotion, which literary critics have referred to as the novel's sense of "lostness," and attempting to wreak it into a thing: a stone, a leaf, an unfound door.

This is what made Wolfe such a terrible Modernist. He was simply too abstract when attempting to distill emotion down to a thing. The Modernists' mantra was, "There are no ideas but in things," but Wolfe always preferred the *idea* over the *thing*. He begins with the abstract—lostness, loneliness, isolation—then casts about for something to which he can attach it. Perhaps that thing could be a stone, a leaf, an unfound door. Or maybe it could be a tan glider, a dark gray crib, or dozens of paint swatches into which we hope to distill the mystery of what it is we're feeling while we wait for our child to be born.

This is what I'm thinking about when my wife suddenly sits up in bed. Her hands go to her stomach, and she spreads her fingers across her belly. Her quick movements scare me, and the dark, unspeakable thing inside me beats against my chest like a fist. But when I look at her I see that she's smiling.

"Are you OK?"

"Yes," she says. "I just felt the baby move."

I close Wolfe's novel, set it on the nightstand, and reach for my wife. She moves her hands apart and I place my open hand between hers, my fingers spread wide across her belly as if I'm trying to grasp something ungraspable. This is the first time she's felt the baby move.

"What did it feel like?"

"I don't know," she says. "I can't explain it."

But that's OK. I know exactly how she feels. Thomas Wolfe does too.

Wiley Cash is a New York Times *best-selling author whose second novel,* This Dark Road to Mercy, *was released last year. He lives in Wilmington.*

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Protectors of the Realm

With their wide-brimmed hats and royal blue T-shirts, Audubon's volunteer bird stewards keep a protective eye on our precious nesting shorebirds

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

If you hear Marlene Eader tell it, she spends her summer days camped out on the south end of Wrightsville Beach because she fell in love with a bird. Not just any bird; Marlene fell hard for the black skimmer. It's a charming clown of a bird — imagine the love child of a toucan and a laughing gull, with an underbite. Yet when the skimmer is on the hunt, it's elegance in motion. Gliding silently above the water, it slips its lower mandible into the sea and slices the silver surface in two until, snap! It claims a glinting fish.

Marlene first saw the black skimmers on the weekly Audubon bird walk at Wrightsville Beach. On that educational excursion, she watched in awe as the skimmers courted. When a male caught a fish, he returned to shore to offer it as a present to a potential mate — an accepted fish is a kind of wedding kiss before a brief avian honeymoon. "I'd visited North Carolina beaches many times over the years," Marlene says, "but I only saw gulls. Then I saw the skimmers engage in their courtship. That day, I learned that they had flown all the way from South America to nest right here in Wrightsville Beach. So, I started going on the Friday bird walk each week with Audubon to watch the birds move from courtship to nesting to rearing their young. It is such a fascinating process. The skimmers, oystercatchers and least terns are all such dedicated parents. It's inspiring to watch them."

Marlene soon became an Audubon bird steward and two years later she became Audubon's volunteer coordinator. From April to August, she and her team of nearly seventy stalwart Audubon volunteers don wide-brimmed hats, royal blue T-shirts, and educate locals and tourists about one of the most successful shorebird nesting colonies in the state.

The volunteers are present at the nesting colony seven days a week from late April through August. They introduce tourists to the colonial shorebirds, provide views through binoculars and a spotting scope so the curious can view the colony from a safe distance, and offer the popular Friday bird walks. The volunteers also

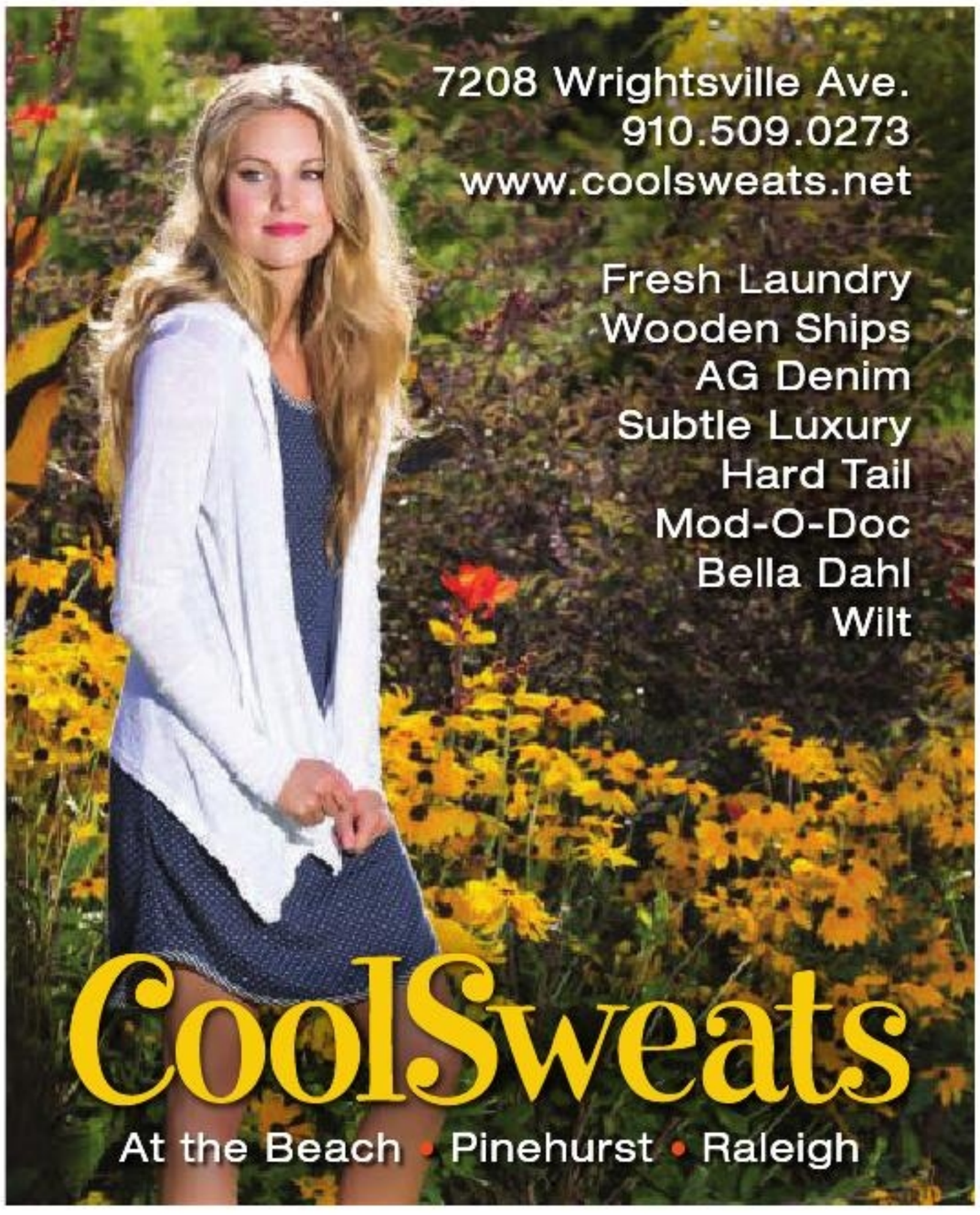
help protect the colony from unintentional intrusion.

Lindsay Addison, Audubon's coastal biologist, explains that "many people are unaware that there's an active nesting colony of black skimmers, least terns and oystercatchers right on Masonboro Inlet." Once they see and learn about the birds, she says they often take pride that these magnificent birds "choose to nest here. Still, some people do get too close, unaware that if the nesting colony is disturbed, the consequences are harsh."

"As bird stewards, we let people know if these birds are disturbed, they leave their eggs untended," says Marlene. "Most people tend to think that birds sit on their eggs to keep them warm, but sand temperatures can reach 120 degrees, so these birds sit on their eggs to shade them and to regulate their temperature. Eggs left too long on the hot sand essentially cook. Chicks left alone will also suffer in the heat and are vulnerable to predation. We let people know that these birds are often hidden in plain sight – for these birds a 'nest' is a small scrape in the sand – so it's easy to step on one by accident."

Often the first sign that you are too close to a nest is if a shorebird "dive bombs" you. Marlene recommends in this situation that people back away carefully, making sure not to crush any eggs or chicks underfoot, and observe from a distance. "Otherwise, you may cause fatal harm to the colony." The vigilance and education efforts of the Audubon bird stewards have helped the Wrightsville Beach nesting colonies become one of the most successful colonies of black skimmers, least terns and oystercatchers in North Carolina.

I visited the Wrightsville Beach colony last July and enjoyed viewing the birds through the stewards' spotting scopes, and taking photos with my super-telephoto lens (so as not to disturb the birds). The midday sun throbbed overhead, and the tide was high. Least terns and skimmers flew back and forth to their nests with fish for their chicks, and a mature oystercatcher shepherded its chick to the shore's edge to feed. The chick had two green bands with the letters CKK. The stewards kept a close eye on this chick as it ran from the dunes to the shore and



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back throughout the afternoon. Occasionally, a tourist ventured over to ask questions, and steward Ruth Pappamihiel introduced herself to each person and shared her extensive knowledge of the colony.

After my visit, I wanted to do more to help. I couldn't commit to a summer of stewarding on Wrightsville Beach, so I contacted Audubon and inquired about other needs. A couple of times a year, Audubon needs volunteers for a day or two to assist with trash cleanup at Audubon protected sites and to assist with shorebird banding. I was lucky to volunteer when Lindsay Addison was running a banding session of brown pelicans. The yearly bandings are often run with master bander John Weske, who has been banding birds along the Atlantic coast for over thirty years.

"The bandings provide us with a lot of data," Lindsay says. "We learn about patterns of movement, longevity and where bird populations nest on a large scale. All of this data aids us in our conservation efforts." When a banded bird is sighted, the numbers can often be read at a distance with a pair of binoculars, a spotting scope or with a telephoto camera. "Some shorebirds perish and we don't know why. But sometimes, it's just time." Then Lindsay tells me "the oldest known least tern was 22, the oldest known black skimmer was 20, and the oldest known American oystercatcher was 17." I'm surprised by this information and realize I've been seeing many of the same birds over the last decade.

On the day of the pelican banding, a group of Audubon volunteers motored out to the dredge spoil islands in the Cape Fear River. It was a scorching hot July day, and we hoped to band around 500 juvenile pelicans. Lindsay and John briefed the volunteers on how to handle the birds to avoid overstressing them. These young birds were still flightless. With one hand she deftly shut the bird's bill while her other hand immobilized the bird's wings from the back as if pressing someone's shoulder blades together. Then she picked the bird up and held it "like a football" until the master bander secured the small numbered ring to its foot. "Be especially careful of their feet," she told us, and for the first time I saw that a pelican's foot has several nails as sharp as cat claws.

By the end of the day, the volunteer group was muddy, sunburnt, scratched and tired. We'd slogged though mucky fields of head-high phragmites, and we smelled like fishmongers. Everyone was giddy. Like Marlene Eader, we'd fallen in love with a bird. Alongside Audubon's dedicated staff, we'll keep working to protect them.

Want to go? Audubon runs bird walks each Friday through August. Meet at public access 43, at the south end of Wrightsville Beach.

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington and occasionally guides with Kayak Carolina.

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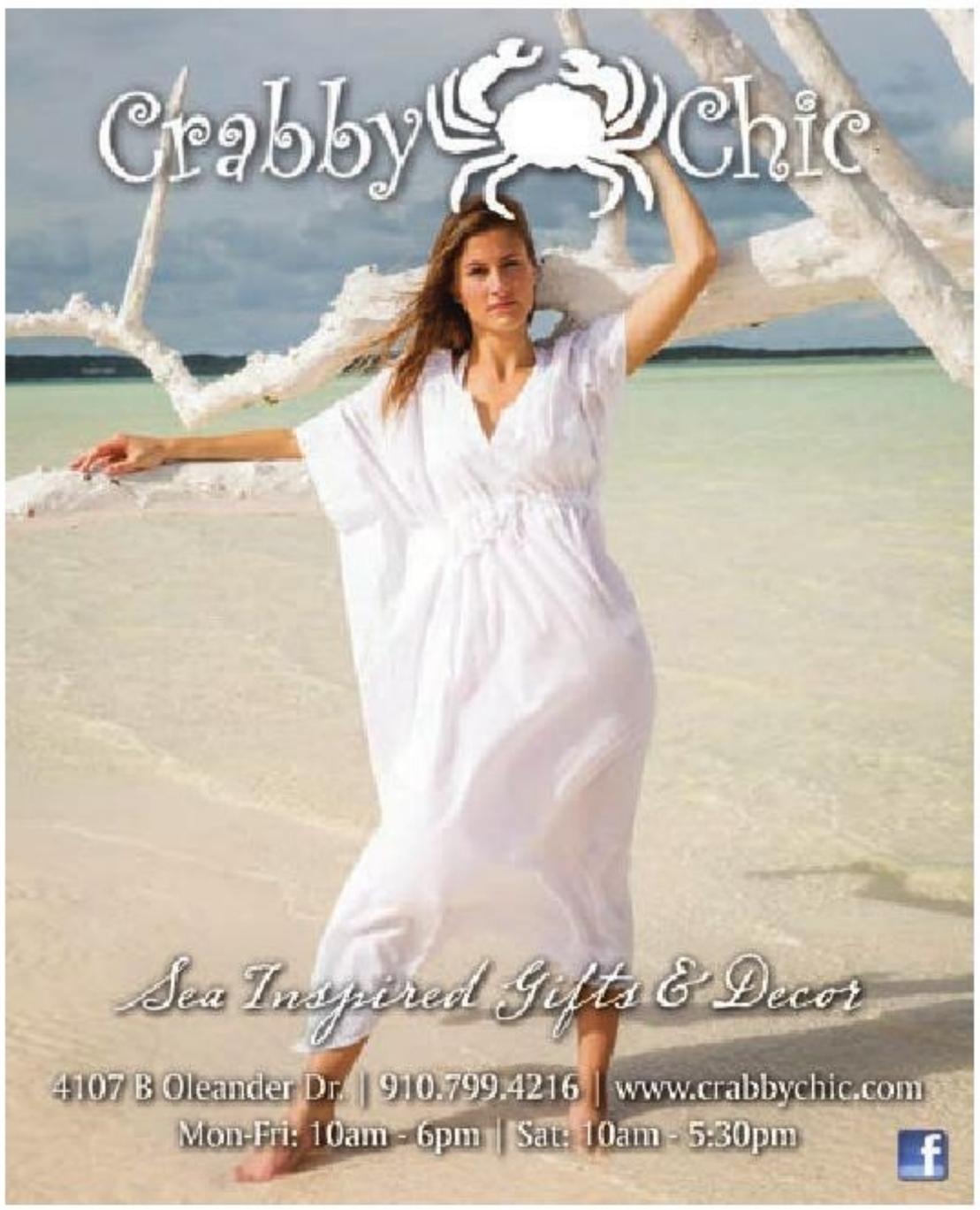


Onward Temperate Days

While shifting of seasons don't cease to amaze
I'm partial to springtime and temperate days

Let's marvel at nature's impeccable dance
Let's welcome the warmth of the season's advance

The brilliance of sunlight across a flushed face
The breath and the billow, our wind's blissful pace

Let's welcome abundance as gardens shall sprout
Collecting the harvest we've since lived without

The cucumber's crisp meets the tastiest plight
The slippery sweet of tomatoes red, bright

The delicate layer of each lettuce leaf
The faint smell of florals, the springtime's relief

Let's summon the birds from their southern migration
Engulfed in delight at the spring's invitation

The fireplace dusted, no longer ablaze
Let's all bid farewell to the winter's malaise

— *Zithobile Nxumalo*

Happiness Made by Hand

6 Things we fancy, made right here in the Cape Fear

By Jason Frye · Photographs by Mark Steelman

"Buy local" is to retail what "farm-to-table" is to dining out — a phrase that once had power and even fueled a movement, but one that's now bandied about so freely it's lost some of its oomph. Wilmington still understands the "buy local" philosophy, though. Thanks to the healthy entrepreneurial spirit evident in those mad geniuses at Freaker USA, the folks at Veggie Wagon and countless artists, artisans and craftspeople, buying local isn't just a phrase, it's a practice.

There are dozens of shops selling hundreds of handmade art, craft, jewelry, pottery, food and clothing items in and around Wilmington. We can't list them all, but we did look around and assemble a few of our favorites, all handmade right here in the Cape Fear. For your next host or hostess gift, your next bar of soap, the next piece of jewelry you gift, do yourself a favor and let it be local.

HEAVY METAL ART:

FROM R MENDED METALS

Coastal décor often pushes into the realm of everything-looks-like-*Coastal Living* and lacks that personal pop. R Mended Metals is the cure to that. With exquisite steel and copper work, they create lifelike fish, turtles and coastal creatures as well as custom signs and furniture. Prices range from $20–$2,000 or even more for custom work or large, multi-part pieces. You can find their work at Blue Moon Gift Shops (203 Racine Drive, Suite 102, Wilmington), Custom Home Furniture Galleries (3514 South College Road), and online at www.rmendedmetals.com.

RE-LOVED FURNISHINGS:

RAMBLING BOUTIQUE

Recycled and up-cycled fail to get to the heart of what Rambling Boutique does with vintage furniture; re-loved is closer to the target. Karla Fierimonte and Heather Metzler refurbish, refinish and re-imagine beautiful and functional furniture pieces — think end tables, desks, shelves, your granny's pie safe — as well as quirky home décor items. Thanks to Fierimonte's graphic design background and Metzler's creative verve, Rambling Boutique manages to surprise with furnishings and home goods that speak to a range of design aesthetics. Prices range from $20 (home décor) to $400 (furniture); you can find Rambling Boutique's goods at Lou's Flower World (5128 Oleander Drive, Wilmington) and online at www.ramblingboutique.com.

ONE WOMAN'S TREASURE:

ISLAND GIRL GLASS

Like most of us who live on the coast, I have a collection of sea glass I've picked up from years of beachcombing, but it's nothing like the collection Joanna Taylor has amassed. She's been gathering beach glass for decades on Topsail Island, and now, through Island Girl Glass, creates jewelry and gift items from her finds. Island Girl Glass creations include necklaces and bracelets ($25–$50), earrings ($24–$35), rings (from $45), wine stoppers and wine glass charms ($10–$17), and other gift items. You can find her products at Blue Moon Gift Shops (203 Racine Drive, Suite 102, Wilmington), Howe Outrageous (307 North Howe Street, Southport), or online at www.islandgirlglass.com.

SCULPTURES:

MICHAEL VAN HOUT

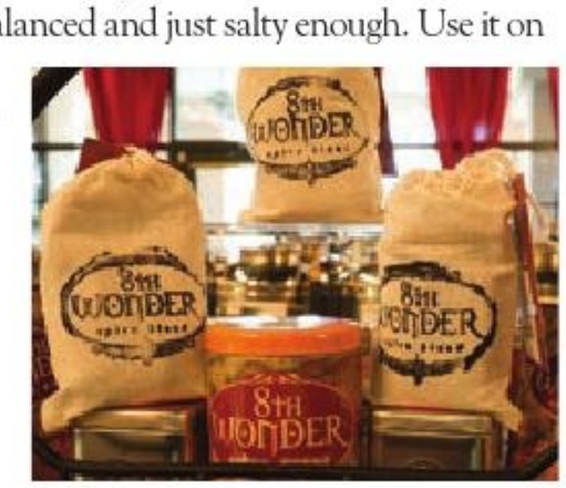
Michael Van Hout's wire sculptures look like sketches made whole in the air. With little more than channel lock pliers, vise grips and heavy wire cutters, he curves, shapes and wraps wire to create delicate sculptures that evoke familiar shapes — an owl, a sparrow, a life-sized guitar player, a bust. Van Hout discovered his artistic calling as a college dropout. "I left college. I was working on a grounds crew taking home bits of scrap wire and making myself little sculptures. It was a very folk art approach." He did go back to school, earning a BFA in sculpture and expanding his horizons. Today, Van Hout teaches sculpture and printmaking classes at Acme Art Studios and Dreams of Wilmington, and his wire, copper and steel sculptures as well as his prints have earned him regional attention. His wire sculptures are available at Spectrum Art & Jewelry (1125 Military Cutoff Road, Suite H) and Acme Art Studios (711 North Fifth Avenue); prices range from $50–$300.

TASTY TREATS:

8TH WONDER SPICE BLEND AND SEA LOVE SEA SALT

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention food. There are so many local treats available — from butter mints to barbecue sauce — that narrowing it down is difficult, but I chose to look at seasonings. Here are a pair of locally-crafted seasonings sure to spice up your next meal.

When it comes to rubs and spice blends, they're often too salty, but 8th Wonder uses 17 ingredients to create a bold splash of flavor that's well balanced and just salty enough. Use it on shrimp or crab in lieu of Old Bay, dust it on a roasted chicken, use it as a blackening spice or on chicken wings or to rim the glass on your Sunday brunch Bloody Mary. 8th Wonder is available at Motts Channel Seafood (120 Short Street, Wrightsville Beach), Taste The Olive (at the Forum), Temptations Everyday Gourmet (Hanover Center, 3501 Oleander Drive, Unit 13; and Porter's Neck Center, 8207 Market Street, Unit F), Cat on a Whisk (600 North Howe Street, Southport), at Harris Teeters across the region, and too many other places to list. Try this spice blend with a $2 sample packet, an $8 tin or $23 bulk jar.



With the ocean as our backyard, it's no wonder that someone is making sea salt from our very own waters. Sea Love is a Wrightsville Beach-based company that collects and evaporates ocean water and harvests the remaining salt. Products come in at $3 for the travel tin, $9 for the standard salt, then $10–$23 for flavored salts; salt scrubs are also available for $15. You can find Sea Love Sea Salt in many regional stores, including Blue Moon Gift Shops (203 Racine Drive, Wilmington), The Seasoned Gourmet (1930 Eastwood Road), Fire & Spice (in the Cotton Exchange) and Whole Foods. For a full listing, or to buy online, visit www.sea-love.com.

STITCH:

HOLLY AIKEN BAGS AND ACCESSORIES

I'll be upfront: I carry a Holly Aiken wallet and I love it. All vinyl; bright, playful colors; simple lines — it's a great piece. Aiken, who has a background in design, carries over these same elements into her entire line, which includes billfolds, wallets and business card holders; computer and tablet sleeves, clutches, wristlets and tote bags; and diaper bags, yoga mat totes and backpacks ($26–$197). She also takes custom orders and introduces new products and designs regularly. Available only in her shop in Raleigh (20 East Hargett Street) and Wrightsville (2035-B Eastwood Road, just before the Intracoastal Waterway bridge) and at www.hollyaiken.com.

Freda Ford, 79, chats with her young neighbor on a recent sunny day. Mrs. Ford recalls that she and her husband were the first blacks to move in on the block back in 1972. "They welcomed us," she remembers. That spirit remains. "If I called out, every one of my neighbors would come."

The Porches of Carolina Place

In Wilmington's historic first suburb, porch-sitting and sharing define the caring sort of neighborhood

PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORY BY MARK HOLMBERG

"I like a porch," 79-year-old Josh Pringle said from the front stoop of his 100-year-old Perry Street home. "Summertime, I'm on the porch."

There's no question that porch-sitting and porch-sharing are part of the magic that makes Carolina Place a neighborhood unlike any other in Wilmington.

Neighbors like Jo Ann Alford are known to pack up a basket of hors d'oeuvres and wine and walk down the street and see who is sitting on their porch, asking, "Are you receiving?"

But then there are the walkers — dog-walkers, baby-walkers, couples young and old, walking and talking in this 70-acre neighborhood that's sort of like the land that time forgot. Only the cars and clothes give a hint at the decade.

Children ride bikes or skateboard in the streets. They play in each other's yards.

"It's very tight-knit," said Chris Cook from the front yard of his bungalow, built in 1919. "You know all your neighbors."

He had fired up the grill right beside the sidewalk in front of his home, a deliberate move he repeats with his wheelbarrow bonfires to invite passersby to stop and join him in this sweet spot beside the much-used Wallace Park.

Deliberate is an interesting way to define this organic, warm, artistic, happily integrated neighborhood of well-used porches that seems so casually hip.

"There's definitely a uniqueness here," said Jordan Zimmerman — formerly

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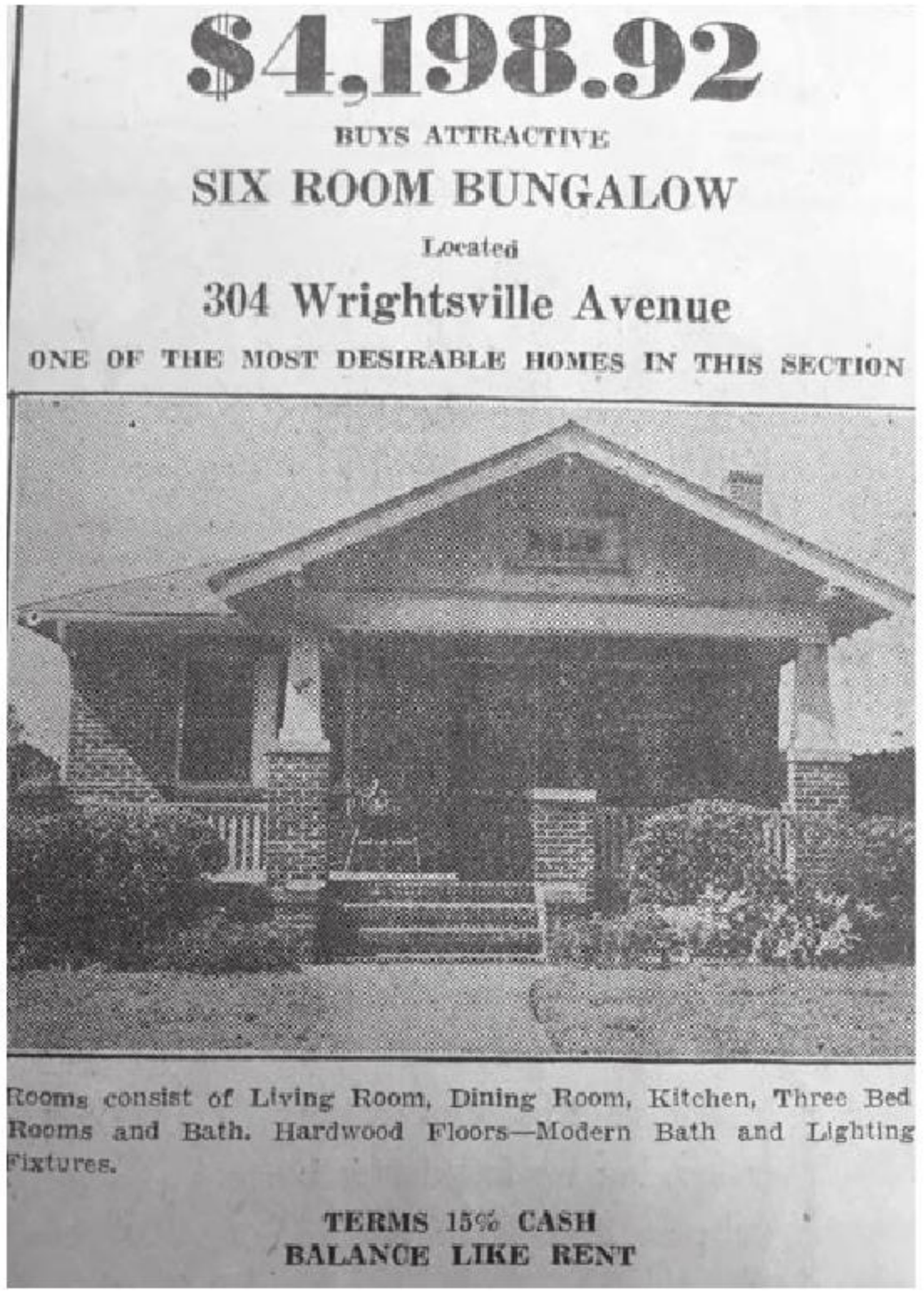
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of Portland, Oregon — as her two daughters played in their front yard with a neighbor girl.

She said Carolina Place's uniqueness isn't accidental. It's based on a conscious collective decision about what residents value: "taking care of each other."

As 79-year-old Freda Ford will tell you, "If I called out, every one of my neighbors would come."

Yes, everything about Carolina Place — Wilmington's first suburb — was deliberate. Right from the very start.

"'Carolina Place' is the name selected for the new suburban settlement which will be developed by the American Suburban Corporation on the Wright property recently acquired to the southeast of the city," announced the *Wilmington Star* newspaper in March 1906. "The name is regarded as very appropriate and will no doubt be popular."

A new rail line was promised to connect Carolina Place to downtown and Wrightsville Beach by "street cars merrily humming."

Modern sewage lines! Fresh city water in new lines! Five hundred new shade trees! Artificial stone sidewalks!

Lots $150 to $350, extra for a corner. Contractors could build a house for $1,500, something the working class and middle class could afford.

And they rushed to buy (along with some shrewd investors and developers).

"The crush was so great about the offices of the company this morning that the doors of General Manger Creecy (for whom one of the streets would be named) had to be locked to keep out the crowds," reported the *Wilmington Star* on March 27, 1906.

But not all were welcome in Carolina Place.

"Lots not sold to colored people," one of the newspaper ads promised. Another said: "No Liquor — No Negroes and Other Healthy Restrictions."

All the promises were kept. The streetcars came, along with the trees, water lines and sidewalks.

Carolina Place was a hit, drawing a wide cross-section of people, including ship-fitters, railway workers, grocers, ministers, tradesmen, engineers, dentists and a candy store owner. It's an array that continues today.

Property values quickly soared.

And eventually, the one mean promise that belied Carolina Place's deliberate plan for accessibility was broken.

Ford recalls that she and her husband were the first blacks to move in on her block of Wolcott Avenue back in 1972.

"They welcomed us, brought us food," she remembers of her neighbors while we relax on her porch.

It was a big change for them, having lived previously on a vegetable and tobacco farm in Leland. But Ford said she felt no fear about the move.

"God came first and I walked in behind him."

Not once, she said, has she felt prejudice or disrespect here.

Her husband, who was a supervisor for city street maintenance, died long ago. She has done everything she can to keep her place as nice as her neighbors' homes.

"I don't want them to show up my porch," she told me, laughing.

But there was nothing funny about the time her furnace broke down in her 103-year-old home. Mrs. Ford recalls being a little overwhelmed.

"Where am I going to get $3,000?" she thought at the time.

Then one of her neighbors found out about her predicament and rallied the troops. "They came in and fixed my furnace," Mrs. Ford said. "Lord . . ."

Across the street, Karlie Atkin pulls her little daughter, Sienna, and nephew, Lincoln, in a wagon down one of those promised artificial stone sidewalks. She's visiting family here from her home in Chico, California.

"It's enchanted us," she said of the child-friendly neighborhood. "We talked to a real estate agent today."

Maria Tauriello gets that. When she was younger, she lived in Carolina Place and loved it, she explains while sitting on her Metts Avenue front porch. She's sketching her 3-year-old daughter, Angela, who is also painting.

Circumstances drew Tauriello away to midtown Wilmington. But when she found out she was going to be a mom, she knew where she wanted her child to grow up.

"I moved back into this neighborhood when she was born," she says as she rubs a shadow into her drawing.

Carolina Place is in the Forest Hills District. "That's like the best elementary school in Wilmington."

That's huge for a parent. Then there's the neighborhood hanging out and grilling out. The group walks with children.

"It's sooo nice! Everyone comes out," Tauriello says.

It's affordable and uber-quaint. Lots of Craftsman bungalows and Colonial Revival homes that have aged well or have been rehabbed. There are some

Maria Tauriello chalks a drawing of her 3-year-old daughter, Angela, painting on their front porch. Maria says when she knew Angela was going to be born, she found a home for them in Carolina Place. "It's so family oriented."

Longtime photojournalist Philip Morgan gives neighbor Quinn Cook a sunny day porch greeting. "The children are picking up on all the charisma and energy in the neighborhood," Philip says. "It's almost like a school."

newer homes to replace those that couldn't stand a century.

A car drives by and beeps. "That's my friend who just moved into the neighborhood," Tauriello says, waving from her porch.

A few blocks away, 28-year-old Laura Ambrogio is cleaning up debris in her yard with a vengeance.

"It's like the perfect mix," she said of the neighborhood residents. "You know everybody. You can count on everybody."

She points out that Carolina Place's Facebook page is a reflection of that. Someone will post that they need help and "there will be guys lining up . . . People light it (the site) up."

Laura was hustling to get done with her yard work because she was home from Dallas, where she recently moved for her job with a brewery.

Her apartment in Dallas is no Carolina Place. "I'm living in a high-rise," she says. "I don't even know my neighbors."

But for all of its homeyness, let's not forget Carolina Place has had its dodgy years. Neighbors still occasionally hear gunshots, and some warn not to leave valuables out on those famously friendly porches.

Michael Swart remembers when he moved into his place on Gibson Avenue back in 1997.

"Literally the week I moved in, a crack house down the street burned down," he recalled while we visited in his amazing shop and studio. "Everyone came out and watched."

"It's less shady now," he added. "It's just easy."

(Right across the street from his house, eighty years ago, was the Salvation Army's Free Food Depot, which served tens of thousands of people.)

Swart, married with young children, is among the well-known artistic residents who give Carolina Place its cool vibe. He designs and builds high-end guitar amplifiers that sell around the world.

And he loves to play. I had been there maybe fifteen minutes before I was drumming for him in his studio.

"This is a great place for this," he said of our impromptu Carolina Place jam.

"Summertime, I'm on the porch," says 79-year-old Josh Pringle, a retired delivery truck driver. He and his wife bought their first home here in 1986. He loves the neighborhood, how everyone leans on each other. "I'm going out of town," he'll tell his neighbors. "Keep an eye on things."

Chris Cook makes a point of grilling or having fires in his yard, right by the sidewalk in front of his 96-year-old house by Wallace Park. "We meet a lot of people," he says. "If there's a fire in the wheelbarrow, everyone comes over."

Karlie Atkin, visiting Carolina Place from Chico, California, walks her daughter, Sienna, and nephew, Lincoln. "It's enchanted us," she said of the child-friendly neighborhood. "We talked to a real estate agent today."

But here again, there's this deliberate desire, a choice, to do the organic things that bring people together, like the annual neighborhood Christmas Crawl.

"We have a lot of young couples with children," said Jo Ann Alford as she enjoyed a sweet afternoon on her Pender Avenue porch with a glass of wine and photographer friend Philip Morgan.

"They are very interested in making it an integrated and supportive neighborhood," she added. "They're young. They're fresh. They're active. They go to meetings."

Yes, the porches of Carolina Place "make a big difference," she said. But it's the people sitting and visiting on them that are shaping the neighborhood and the youngsters growing up here.

"The children are picking up on all the charisma and energy in the neighborhood," Morgan, a longtime photojournalist, said. "It's almost like a school."

Across the street, Chris Cook is almost done barbecuing his chicken by the sidewalk overlooking the park. Yes, he said, that's exactly what he wants for his little girl, now in third grade.

"Our daughter will grow up mixed in with different races and languages . . . in and out of each other's yards."

And, no doubt, on their porches.

Over on Perry Street, Josh Pringle is making sure his (porch) is ready for the season. This very day he had a new front door installed. All the chairs are lined up for his family and friends.

The retired delivery truck driver remembers well the day he moved in back in '86. He said his dream of owning his own home came true at the age of 50 after he and his family had lived 15 years in the Rankin Terrace housing project.

What a feeling at that was, he recalled with a smile, having a Carolina place his family could call their own.

Venus Envy

Our exotic, native and endangered Venus flytrap enjoys a long and provocative history on the lusty minds of plant fanciers.

By Nan Graham

Feed me! Feed me! sings the demanding flesh-eating plant to her nerdy owner in *The Little Shop of Horrors*.

In the black comedy film and musical, Audrey, an Amazonian female plant who sings and feeds on human blood, looks surprisingly familiar. But her table manners . . . deplorable.

The image of our own local real carnivorous beauty comes to mind: the Venus flytrap. She has been a local celebrity for over three centuries now (unlike Audrey, who only entered our lexicon in the 1980s. Like any rock star, the flytrap (aka Dionaea muscipula) has her own cult following: The International Carnivorous Plant Society and The Botanical Society of America's Venus Flytrap.

Wilmington, North Carolina, is the center of the VFT's native habitat. She only grows in the wild within a 90-mile radius of the city, though during the past decades, she has been cultivated and cloned in European and American greenhouses.

Because she cannot receive enough nutrients from the poor soil in the wild, she is a death trap for living creatures: yummy insects . . . the necessary entrée to supplement her diet. She lures the unsuspecting into her trap with her appealing rosy interior, laced with a sticky protein substance. The insect lights near the trigger hairs, steps within the lobe and SNAP . . . the toothy hairs close around the victim. The trap snaps shut within one tenth of a second on the clueless insect, the trapping motion said to be "one of the fastest movements in the plant kingdom." Dinner is served. Or as they say down South, "Dinner on the grounds."

Like the boa constrictor, the VFT squeezes the insect in its grip. Unlike the snake, the mouth of the VFT is also its stomach. Once its lobes are sealed, she immediately secretes a digestive juice and purify-

ing solution to break down the insect. Within five to twelve days, the last bit of bug is digested. We do not have reports of burps after the protein meal, but we do know that a good-sized insect will satisfy a VFT for several days, even weeks. If, say, a grasshopper or praying mantis is too large and projects from the lobe, the trap cannot close and seal properly and will turn black and die.

The usually well-mannered cannibal will "spit out" a foreign non-food object like a small rock or nut after twelve hours' consideration and rejection. Scientists don't know exactly how the flytrap does any of this since it has no nervous system or muscles, much less a brain. They believe the plant may have some actual electrical current that initiates pressure from fluid within the plant and activates the trap.

How did this species happen to develop? Again, a guess from scientists is that the plant, unable to survive in boggy, sub-standard soil, developed this alternate menu to satisfy its food needs and palate.

The first person to write about the curiosity was Arthur Dobbs, Colonial governor of North Carolina under King George III in a 1750 letter to John Bartram, Colonial royal botanist to the king. In 1773, John and son William traveled through North and South Carolina, Georgia and Florida recording all they saw: details of New World plant life but also native customs of the Choctaws and Cherokee. Father John published *Bartram's Travels* in 1791, describing their exotic adventures and the first sighting of this strange marvel of the plant world.

It was that old rascal John who gave the peculiar plant its name, Venus flytrap, and also coined the slang word Tippity-whitchet, a naughty nickname for the VFT. The amazed gentlemen of London are said to have roared with laughter and snickered at Bartram's "show and tell" of the plant from the New World. And especially when he explained why he named the strange plant "Venus" for the Roman goddess of love. John is said to have used some graphic and specific language about the trap as he demonstrated its particulars. Reports from those in attendance say Bartram surely made off-color remarks to cause such an uproar from the gathering of botanists.

We only have to observe the plant to understand the snorting laughs. Bartram was clearly noting the flytrap's similarity to lady parts. He further coined the nickname Tippity-whitchet for the rare plant, which caused even more adolescent giggles amongst the esteemed botanists of London. A French visitor to Bartram's English garden, being French, was even more amused. Bartram says, unlike the English, the Frenchman "couldn't stop laughing" when viewing a demonstration of the plant's extraordinary abilities. (Historians for many years pontificated in academic tones that the Tippitiwhichet or Tippity-whitchet must surely be a name of Native American derivation. Linguists today say no.)

In 1762, Englishman Peter Collison wrote Bartram a letter revealing frustration over Dobbs' silence on his previous requests for specimen of the Venus flytrap. Old Arthur Dobbs, 73, had just married the very young Justina Davis, age 15, and had other things on his mind. As Collison replied to Bartram:

"It is now in vain to write to him for seeds or plants of the Tipitiwitchet now He has got one of his Own to play with."

Dobbs had a stroke shortly after the scandalous marriage and died three years later in the arms of his devoted wife, Justina. She went on to marry Abner Nash, who became governor of North Carolina. They had three children before she died at 25. A cultivar Venus flytrap, named "Justina Davis," is a rare all-green plant. It seems fitting for one who was on this Earth for such a brief but eventful time.

Here in 20th century Wilmington, the Rehder brothers Stanley and Henry, experts on the little plant, became known as the "Flytrap Brothers" in the '40s through the '60s. Their frequent forays into the Green Swamp area to explore the habitat of the VFT made them the most knowledgeable plant hunters around. Interviewed by Barbara Walters and *Good Morning America*, the brothers became known in the low country as hands-on experts on the plant. Henry's car even sported a license plate reading FLYCATCHER.

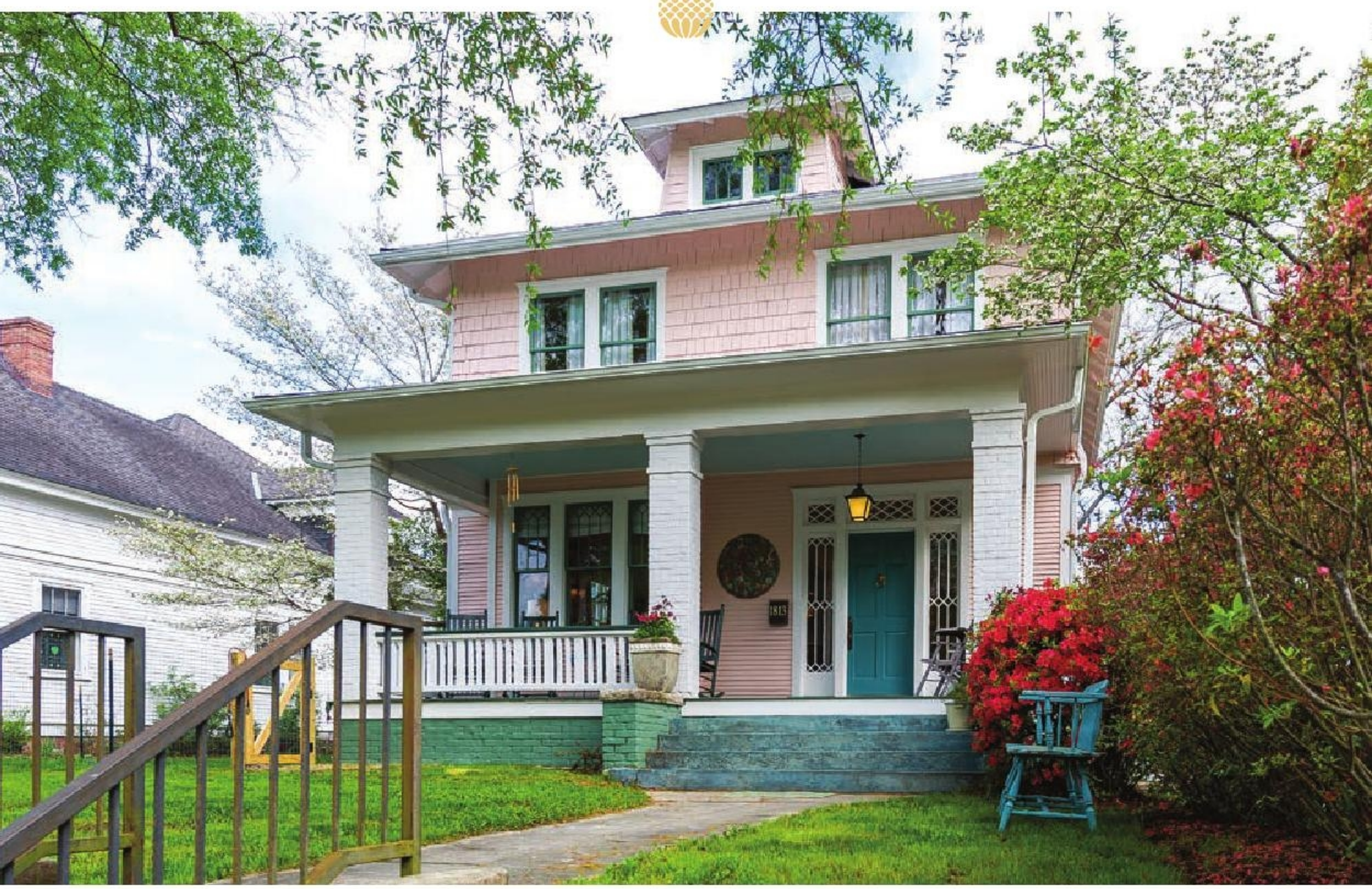
Recently, worldwide press of the theft of thousands of the endangered beauties here in Wilmington, Boiling Springs and Holly Shelter raised international concern for the plant. Thieves at the Stanley Rehder Carnivorous Plant Garden stole over a thousand of the rare wild plants, which are being restored by the cultivated VFT by concerned locals. The news persuaded the North Carolina legislature to elevate the crime from classification of misdemeanor ($50) to felony (twenty-four to thirty months jail time) to help protect the vulnerable and vanishing native. The four thieves were captured and arrested under new felony charges. Planning to sell the VFTs at 25 to 50 cents per plant, they could hardly have made a profit from their crime. One might speculate the criminals were overcome by faux Freudian "Venus envy."

Tantalizing hints of possible cancer-curing uses have made the flytrap even more seductive. In Germany, researchers continue to explore the curative powers of the bewitching plant on such diseases as cancer and Parkinson's. Experimental cures for Lyme disease and malaria are also being examined and are said to be promising.

Apparently it is the era of the VFT: Flytrap songs, an astounding 15-foot-tall metal and glass sculpture by Paul Hill of the plant named "Southern Hospitality" overlooking the Cape Fear River in Wilmington, paintings, collages, her distant cousin Audrey (the giant plant of *The Little Shop of Horrors*), and even a local beer pub bears the VFT name. Charles Darwin said she "was one of the most wonderful plants in the world" — an opinion shared by many.

Should you purchase a VFT (from a reputable source, of course), remember the flytrap will have indigestion if you feed it hamburger or people food. Or worse, the tidbit may prove its fatal last meal. They can only digest insects, so no store-bought snacks like Doritos for your pet plant. You have a remarkable native beauty to observe. Just don't be surprised to hear a soft "Feed me, feed me," whispered from the flowerpot on your windowsill.

Nan Graham, literary doyenne of the Cape Fear, is a frequent contributor to Salt *magazine.*



Healing Gay Adair

With a little love and feng shui, a once-shabby house on a hill became the perfect space to start anew

By Joel Finsel · Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

In the century-old suburb of Carolina Heights, back when canary-yellow trolley cars still ran from downtown to the beach, a two-story house was built on a corner lot. Unlike many of the other homes in the neighborhood, there's no historic plaque near the front door. It's certainly eligible, residing in the official historic district, but the research has not yet been done. The new owner seems to prefer a bit of mystery, or maybe she's just been so busy restoring it to its former grandeur that she has shrugged off worrying about its past. We don't yet know the name of the man or woman who chose the design from the Sears-Roebuck catalog over a hundred years ago and purchased the ground. But we know that the pre-cut pieces arrived by train and were assembled in 1910. Aside from those details, all Gay Adair needs to know about her new home is that for over a hundred years, it sheltered many lives until it, like her, fell on hard times.

When she took possession in late 2012, all but two of the floor joists in the kitchen had rotted. Walking on the layers of pegboard that had been installed as a patch felt like walking on a sponge. Outside, shutters hung at oblique angles. The place was in such remarkable disrepair that *One Tree Hill* featured it in an episode called "Not Afraid" as the creepy house that was too scary for trick-or-treaters to approach. Inside the entry hall, the wallpaper was peach, with images of black and white women in antebellum dresses walking amid blooming magnolias and plantation homes. The car-

"As above, so below,
as within, so without,
as the universe, so the soul."
– Hermes Trismegistus

pet reeked of dog. The bathroom walls featured gods and humans frozen in mid-bacchanalian orgy. The shower was stacked with trailer tires. At the top of the stairwell: a wall. A person could walk up a few steps, turn left; up a couple more, turn left again; up the last few and all you could do was try to listen through the barrier separating the house in two. The only way to access the second floor was by a set of wooden stairs in the backyard. Inside felt "dark" and "oppressive," according to a neighbor who admitted that she couldn't believe someone actually lived there. Yet someone did, in fact. A venerable man who kept his bed in the dining room. He passed away four months before the house was sold.

Having known Gay Adair for the past eight years, I asked her if she felt like the state of the house was anything like the state of her life when she bought it. She had been smoking a Sherman cigarette by an open window but turned immediately. "Yes," she said. "It was exactly the same. That's why I was undaunted."

I first met Adair when she opened her second furniture store, the Gypsy Jewel Wagon, downtown. Many others remember her from her first, The Red Dinette. Fewer people know that before her career in interior design she was a modern dancer for eighteen years and studied under Martha Graham in New York. There's a photo of her posing in tights in her downstairs bathroom. Her hip is cocked to the side, facing away, arms stretched overhead. After New York, she returned to Arkansas, her home state, and founded her own troupe, the Church of Perpetual Motion, named for the old church where they practiced. She fell for the dilapidated structure because it was never modernized. The attic became her living space; the Sunday School room, her kitchen. In the sanctuary, she danced and choreographed, later receiving a national endowment grant. She had invested so much of herself in the building that when it became time for her to move on, she was confident it would sell. "I had this really crusty, chain-smoking realtor," she said. "I was so proud when I showed her around. And do you know what she said when I asked how much she thought it was worth? She said, 'Burn the son-of-a-bitch!'"

But Gay didn't listen. Her intuition was right. The church sold in a week to a couple from San Francisco. The fact that it sold so easily reinforced her belief that, of all the things she did in life, she could always count on selling her homes for profit . . . at least the first twelve. "I treated each like I was going to live in it forever," she said. "I never did it thinking I would make money, but I always bought houses with a certain soul."

When age forced her to retire from dancing, she embraced her gift of arranging objects in ways that harmonize a person in his or her environment and began to study under a master of feng shui. To catalyze the start of her new life, she moved to Wilmington. This was back, she says, when the *Henrietta* was little and cute, Claude Howell read from his journal on the radio, and WHQR's only programming was opera on Saturdays. She loved how people gathered around steaming cups inside Front Street News, and later, Caffe Phoenix. Inspired by the play of color on the ocean and river, she finally felt free to do what she had longed to do ever since she was 6 years old and sneaked downstairs at night to rearrange her Aunt Rosy's furniture.

By the time we met, Adair's career had been humming for many years. Aside

PLEASE PAY
WHEN SERVED

from local clients, she spent weeks on the road and earned excellent money. But she wasn't happy. She and her husband separated a few years later. She was forced to sell her condo on the Intracoastal Waterway for a loss. After experimental brain surgery, the once-nimble dancer had to relearn how to walk. Her hearing evaporated in one ear. And then her mother grew ill, and passed. Yet underneath all of the pain, she discovered an upside. "It made me a lot nicer," she said. "Before the surgery, I was driven. I worked seven days a week, at one point decorating twenty houses at a time. I suddenly had to relearn how to live all over again. I was single and alone and scattershot everything until . . . this house."

Approaching the front yard, the first thing I noticed was how the house sits up on a hill. The lowest porch step is at eye level from the sidewalk. The front windows peer outward, as if from a perch, giving the impression of an actor on stage. Adair first discovered the house twenty-three years ago, before the brass gutters were swapped for vinyl and the garage collapsed out back. While the former owner lived his final year in the house, Adair traveled with one of her two daughters to Marrakech to be near her son, an English teacher abroad. When he was reassigned to Shanghai, she moved to the French island of Guadeloupe and took language lessons every day until her visa expired. Back in Wilmington, where she had once fallen for the colors of the sky and the smell of mud and marsh grass, she found herself walking around Carolina Heights one afternoon after helping a friend nearby. To her amazement, the house that she had developed a crush on two decades before was now for sale. She offered $100,000. After three months, someone finally called her back, and they were able to settle on $130,000. "The day I closed, I came over and ripped out the carpet myself," she said. "It felt so good to be doing something." Of all of her previous homes, this would be the first in three decades she designed alone. "I saw it all right away," she said. "I still have the original sketches, and it never changed. I love how it's so high in the trees and has access to so much light. It's my homage to the feel and history of the town. This house is the lab, and it has been very healing to me."

She first broke down the wall at the top of the stairs, and burned cedar boughs in an iron skillet as she walked around, contemplating her plan. She opened another wall downstairs, careful to have the trim milled to copy the original arches, and installed kitchen windows big enough to allow the morning light to bounce all the way across the floor to the far wall. Around the windows, she chose a sylvan-themed wallpaper with leaves that pull the

outside trees in with a Disney-like magic. "When I'm planning a room, I always ask, do the colors pull me in from the front door?"

Of the many intriguing objects, two in particular snagged my eyes. The first is a black-and-white photograph of a young woman smiling brightly, which is actually the door of her fridge. While envisioning what to install for this centerpiece, she just happened to be unpacking a box in which she had rolled up the image of her mother that she had blown up for her 90th birthday. "My mother was a powerhouse," Adair said. "She was the first woman president of a telephone company even though she never went to college. We flew all over together and went to nice restaurants. It became a family joke that I would always have to go to the bathroom as soon as we sat down so I could explore all of the rooms. When I unrolled that photo, I ran down the stairs like I had won the lottery. And it fit so perfectly in the space."

The second object is the photograph of a woman tickling her bare derrière with a feather. But even if you get caught staring at it, as I often do while washing my hands in her kitchen sink, it's easy to save face with a quick glance around, for there is fascination everywhere. An old sign warns "Safe Cooking is Good Cooking" and it has done so in every kitchen she has ever owned. "My kids fight over who gets that one," she said. "It's funny. With fire and knives, there's nothing safe about cooking." Maybe, but at least her kitchen floor is no longer sagging. After investing an additional $225,000, the house now sits on a solid foundation with a new roof overhead. There's a new garage in the works, as well as a saltwater pool.

But the transformation hasn't always been peaceful. The morning after the massive hole was dug in the yard, she had a terrible dream and couldn't sleep. Feeling a need to mend the damage, she called a healer friend named Joyce, who led her through a meditation of protection and renewal. They burned sage afterward and spread sea salt around the perimeter of the yard. "Joyce felt the presence of more than one friendly female spirit," Adair said, "and I have felt nothing but safety and creativity ever since. It's become hard for me to leave."

Near the end of the remodel, a man contacted her. The house once belonged to his grandmother and he had visited often while growing up. He asked if it would be OK if he brought over his own grandchildren. A couple of weeks later, he arrived with nine or ten other family members, older folks as well as babies. "They were all very polite and dressed for church," Adair said. "They were so lovely. And as I described to them what I was planning to do, I often heard someone gasp and say, 'Why, that's exactly what grandma had done!' Talk about healing. Then, as they were leaving, the oldest son said that he remembered visiting only one time outside of summer, on his birthday."

"Oh yeah," she asked, "when was that?"

When he said November 25th it was her turn to gasp.

"That's my birthday," she said, smiling.

"Hang on to your hat," he said, pointing back inside. "Because my Grandma, the woman who died in the dining room, that's her birthday too."

The Bloom Room

In Dagmar Cooley's remarkable teaching space, garden ideas gloriously come to life

By Gwenyfar Rohler · Photographs by Mark Steelman

If you ask Zach Hanner about his brilliant wife, Dagmar Cooley, he will reply: "She comes home every day dirty and happy." Dagmar laughs when I tell her this and agrees. "Well, it's nice to come home and feel the dirt — but it's nice to take a shower too, and have it all go away." We are standing in the Bloom Room, her new office and workshop space on South Second Street. It is tiny, but Dagmar has a presence that fills any space with joy and vibrancy, making wherever you are with her feel expansive and encouraging. Being around her is like spending time with your best friend, kindergarten teacher and favorite celebrity all at once.

About fifteen years ago, Dagmar was working for Ticketmaster when she decided to enroll in Cape Fear Community College's landscape gardening program. The difference between spending all day with a computer or with trees and flowers defies description. "I call myself a 'professional gardener' more than a 'designer,'" Dagmar clarifies. She is just as fulfilled by watering and pruning as she is by designing and developing. Things growing and coming into their own — that's what excites her.

"The City Club has been my client for years," she explains. When the little outbuilding at the front of the property became available, they said to her, "You need a downtown office."

"I really didn't!" Dagmar laughs. But she loves the garden space that she has nurtured in front of the City Club so much that the opportunity to be with it every day was too alluring. Plus the "office" came with a terraced back garden space that connects with the City Club garden through a wrought iron gate. Dagmar could make it a contemporary garden work and event space to complement the traditional garden space next door and really showcase her range of skills.

She opens the connecting gate and Sister, her feral cat, darts past us. "I've been feeding her for over a year and she still won't let me pet her." Dagmar smiles and holds up her hands. She gestures to the beautiful terraced beds and talks about the importance of filling them with color year-round, because the City Club hosts a lot of weddings. "Zach and I got married here," she says, eyes twinkling. "Right under that tree."

She is far away now, looking over her garden, and in this instant I know that caring for this space and making it the most beautiful place she can for other brides is her quiet, special gift to them. They may never meet her, but through her hands, her heart is with them on their big day.

"Really, I have a Pinterest addiction," Dagmar answers when my friend Allison asks about the Bloom Room. Allison, Donna and I are here for a workshop on mini gardens and Dagmar has pulled out all the stops: brie, apricot-filled soft cheese, fruit, wine spritzers and an array of garden options that cover almost every available surface in the small building. She can't stop gushing with excitement — every other sentence starts: "Or you could do . . ."

Allison is busy creating a world for her two-headed burro's tail in a beautiful glass planter. "How about some sand?" Dagmar disappears into a store closet and comes back arms laden with a variety of fillers. "Or, these rocks are pearly. Or . . ." Allison grins and tilts her head trying to make up her mind, clearly thrilled by the smorgasbord. Across the table, Donna carefully trails succulents from her planter, making it look like hair spilling over the side. "What about some Spanish moss for contrast?" Dagmar asks. Again she reappears, this time with a plethora of mosses: bright green, trailing, spongey, gray . . . "Uh, I think the gray for the contrast . . ." Donna ventures. It's a little overwhelming. But in a few minutes, Donna's planter has hair, contrast and a lovely shell acting as a barrette to hold everything in place. I am much more subdued with a glass hanging planter and an air plant. We have to scale back to a smaller air plant because the first one would have required some squeezing to get it into the shell inside the planter. "Uh, no . . . I can't do the squeez-

ing . . . I'm too empathetic for that . . ." I apologize.

"OK! Look, this one is smaller. You could do that! Or, you could . . ." and Dagmar is off to the races again, ideas pouring out of her faster than we can drink wine spritzers.

I finish earlier than the others and find a contemplation of Jill Webb's mural on the wall a good distraction from the excitement of the table. Dagmar notices my gaze and whispers: "It took three weeks — but it is incredible, isn't it? She did it all with spray paint!" From the watering can at the apex to the shoots of green growth and the roots, it is marvelous with different layers of texture and visual stimulation throughout. Immersed in this beautiful room with friends, plants, food, wine, good cheer and a beautiful mural, I finally understand that this experience — the garden, the office, the afternoon — is Dagmar made manifest and shared with the world. Filled with multiple layers and new shoots of excitement but supported by strong roots, she is here, spreading her branches to encompass all who come.

Man of the People

Self-taught horticulturist George Ross had a gift of bringing people together to grow an enchanted garden, the heart of the Hobby Greenhouse Club that honors him to this day

By Barbara Sullivan

Although best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell never met George Ross, Gladwell's book *The Tipping Point* is full of descriptions of people just like George, those unusual souls who bring about change by the sheer force of their personalities. In the book, Gladwell describes those rare individuals who manage to connect a variety of people who would normally never meet one another and, as a result, bring about transformation. These are the "connectors": people with "a truly extraordinary knack for making friends and acquaintances"; people with "a special gift for bringing the world together."

George Ross was, among other things, a true connector and a man ahead of his time. He was networking as far back as the 1920s; he was an early adopter of the permaculture movement, a recycler, a self-taught horticulturalist and a formidable instigator who not only enticed people to work with him on projects, but kept them motivated to continue on with the work for years afterward.

Ross, who died in 1994 at age 85, is remembered universally as a people person. His friends and family will tell you that he loved plants, but he didn't love plants half as much as he loved people. If he hadn't managed to surround himself with people in the pursuit of his various plant-related schemes, he might not have even bothered with all that grafting and potting and messing about in the dirt. The people were the real draw for him, and he attracted them through a combination of friendly, easygoing calm and an almost contagious love of sharing: sharing knowledge, sharing space and resources, sharing food and fun, and most importantly, sharing the people he collected.

One of his first group efforts was the Washington Field Museum, aka the Bug House Lab, in Beaufort County, North Carolina, which he and his teenage friends virtually started on their own so they could exhibit a variety of insects, bugs, snakes and other wildlife they collected. Later, he persuaded some of those same friends to work together building a cabin on the Pamlico River. The sign on the door read "OURS", a fitting motto for how George looked at just about everything he undertook in his life.

His most long-lasting and impressive spell of people collecting began in 1956, when he and his wife, Eva, moved into their house at 2318 Metts Avenue in Wilmington, a move that would eventually transform not only the immediate neighborhood but much of the plant-loving community at large. The shape of the Ross's lot played an important role in this. The house sat on a piece of land running 50 feet wide by 700 feet deep — something like an oversized bowling alley. It extended back down to a low-lying forested area bordering Burnt Mill Creek. All of the neighboring lots had the same long, narrow configuration. From down by the creek, with the tangle of vegetation, it was hard to tell whose yard was whose.

By 1960, the men who lived on the three adjoining properties on Metts, George Ross, Robert "Doc" Huffman and Ernest Beale, had discovered a shared love of camellias. They attended meetings of the local Camellia Club, wandered each other's yards to check out the various grafts they were experimenting with, and worked together to build a greenhouse for the more delicate, cold-sensitive plants they were propagating.

At some point, under George's persuasive influence, they agreed that it would be a fine idea to combine their three long, narrow yards into one great big spread — a kind of shared camellia paradise along with a generous helping of azaleas, dogwoods, a sprinkling of daffodils and other spring bloomers they could all enjoy communally. They held parties together, put on cookouts and luaus. The children of the three families roamed the paths, played by the creek and explored hidden nooks and crannies of the camellia forests. And then gradually the joint property, dubbed "Plantation Gardens," morphed into something bigger than the three families could have originally anticipated.

New structures came into being — welcoming arches leading from one yard to the next, additional greenhouses for propagating everything from night-blooming cereus to Texas ivy, bridges over Burnt Mill Creek including a kind of bridge-gazebo with a place to sit and enjoy the birdsong and the hundreds of spring blooms. Through teamwork, a Quonset hut-style greenhouse was built over the creek to exploit the warming effects of the water flow. George got people to help him rig tall overhead lighting along the length of his property, eventually extending all the way from the house down to the creek, giving the garden a magical nighttime appeal.

According to most reports, George was the instigator behind much of the creative re-imagining of the three properties. Among the camellias and azaleas, and always with the help of others, he built fountains, tree-like metal structures for hanging baskets, an artesian well. With a keen eye for discarded materials, he repurposed and reused anything he could get his hands on. When the Atlantic Coastline Railroad left town, he bought up the Pullman car windows for his greenhouses. Cast-off glass doors from Belk became table tops, and an old wash-

ing machine drum found new life as an overhead light fixture. He took *Star News* newspaper plates, used once and no longer needed, and reshaped them into plant containers. He was recycling long before recycling became cool.

When the Cape Fear Garden Club began to feature Plantation Gardens as part of the Azalea Festival tour, often at night when the effect of the overhead lighting along the woodland paths could be enjoyed, the gardens became known to the general public. Gradually, over the years, hundreds of people got involved with their care and upkeep. Not surprisingly, the trail often led back to George. As it happened, two of the greenhouses on his property were sizable affairs, big enough to hold twenty people standing along two sides of one long central workbench who might want to learn how to propagate things — or, in the case of the greenhouse closest to the house, a two-room affair that could hold rows of folding chairs where people could comfortably listen to speakers talk about candelabra cactus or the care and feeding of staghorn ferns. George managed to make those scenarios come true through a slow, unstoppable process of networking and collaborating.

Before Cape Fear Community College (then known as Cape Fear Technical Institute) developed a formal horticultural program, they offered courses to the public at the Ross greenhouses. Instructors from NC State, master gardeners, local experts on everything from landscaping to sand casting, bonsai to hydroponics, air-layering to flower arranging taught classes at the Metts Avenue location beginning in 1974 and continuing on until 1981 with, all told, some 1,200 people attending. It was often George who located and persuaded the experts to come and teach.

Even if you didn't attend a CFTI class, you might stop by Plantation Gardens for the annual plant sale, an event which began with an idea George had for raising enough money for a small neighborhood party and getting rid of excess plants at the same time. Eventually the plant sale gathered enough momentum to take on a life of its own, attracting hundreds of members of the general public and becoming a Wilmington institution. All of this activity — the intensive propagating, the weekly CFTI classes, the public plant sales and the frequent garden tours depended in large part on George's ability to convince people to come work for free. Willing volunteers joined with court-assigned community service workers to clear out vines and weeds, rake and mow, repot, clean, scrub and propagate. Just about any day of the week, during the heyday of the gardens, someone would be there helping out. At lunchtime, he would call everyone into the big greenhouse and serve them ham biscuits with pickles, sweet tea and vanilla wafer cookies. If you happened to be there in the evening you could hear him call the raccoons out of hiding and watch as almost two dozen of them climbed onto the multi-level platforms he'd built and scarf down their dinners. There was always something going on at 2318 Metts.

Much of the volunteer labor that kept Plantation Gardens and the plant sales going was supplied by members of the Hobby Greenhouse Club, another of George's spiritual offspring. The club's founders were students who'd taken the CFTI greenhouse course. They met at the Ross greenhouse until the time of his death. The club now meets at the New Hanover County Arboretum and sponsors scholarships for CFCC and Brunswick Community College students and runs the annual plant sale. In memory of the man who did so much to bring the Wilmington plant community together, they raised money to build and maintain the arboretum's George Ross Memorial Greenhouse.

George's ultimate dream was to have Plantation Gardens and the nearby property dedicated as a public garden, but that never came to pass. Instead, he left a legacy for the hundreds of people whose lives he touched by giving them a place where they could learn something new, share the joy of building things together, meet people of different ages and socioeconomic backgrounds they would never otherwise meet, form new friendships, eat ham biscuits and maybe even take home a few potted plants. He was the kind of unusual person who, though self-effacing and never wanting to be the center of attention, nevertheless left an indelible impression on just about everyone who ever knew him.

Barbara Sullivan is the author of Garden Perennials for the Coastal South. *Her downtown Wilmington garden has been featured on the PBS show* Garden Smart.

Vendor Martha Compton

The Hobby Greenhouse annual plant sale

Vendor David Rahimi

Vendor Duane Truscott

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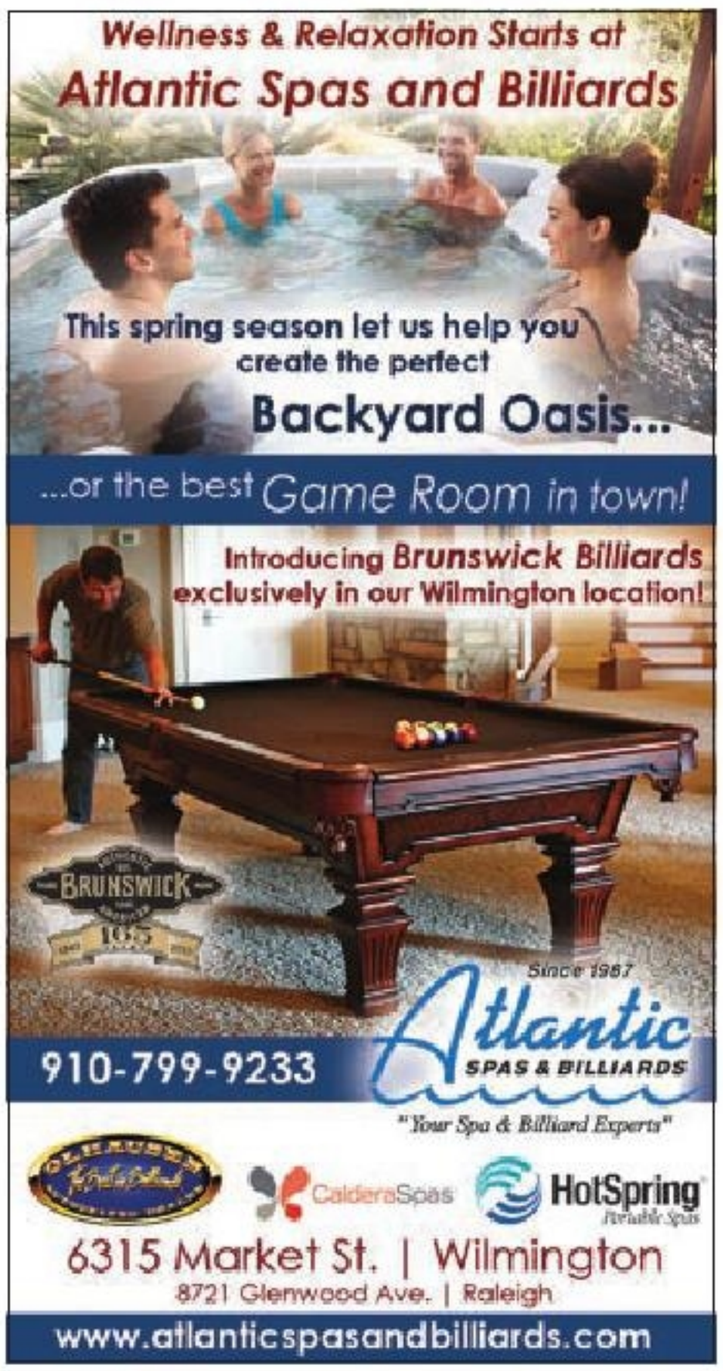
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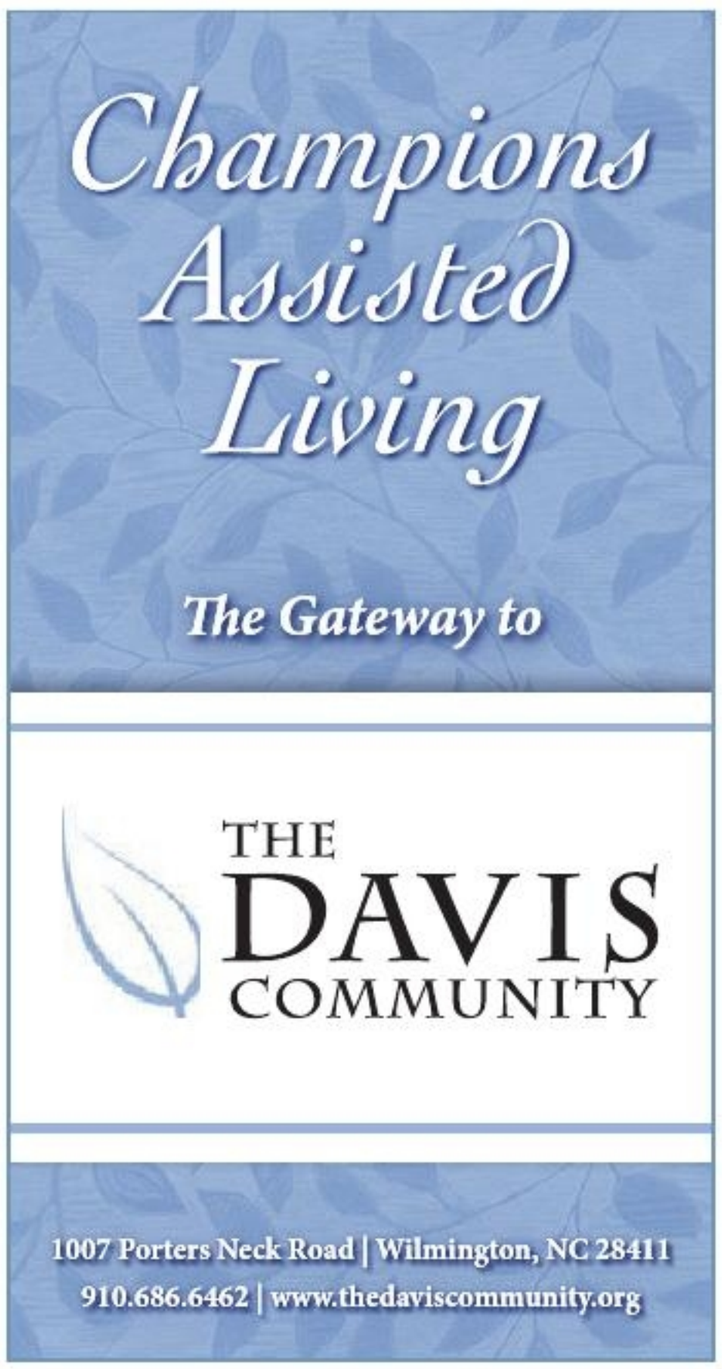
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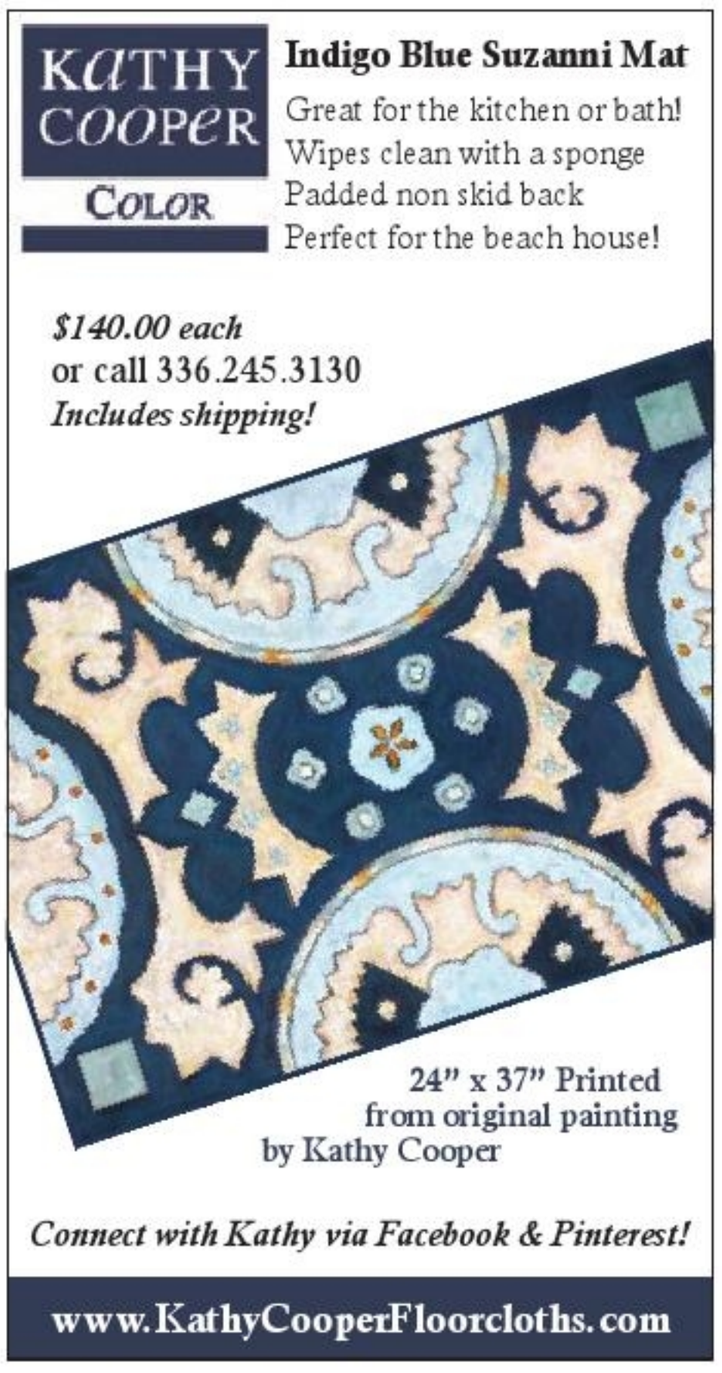
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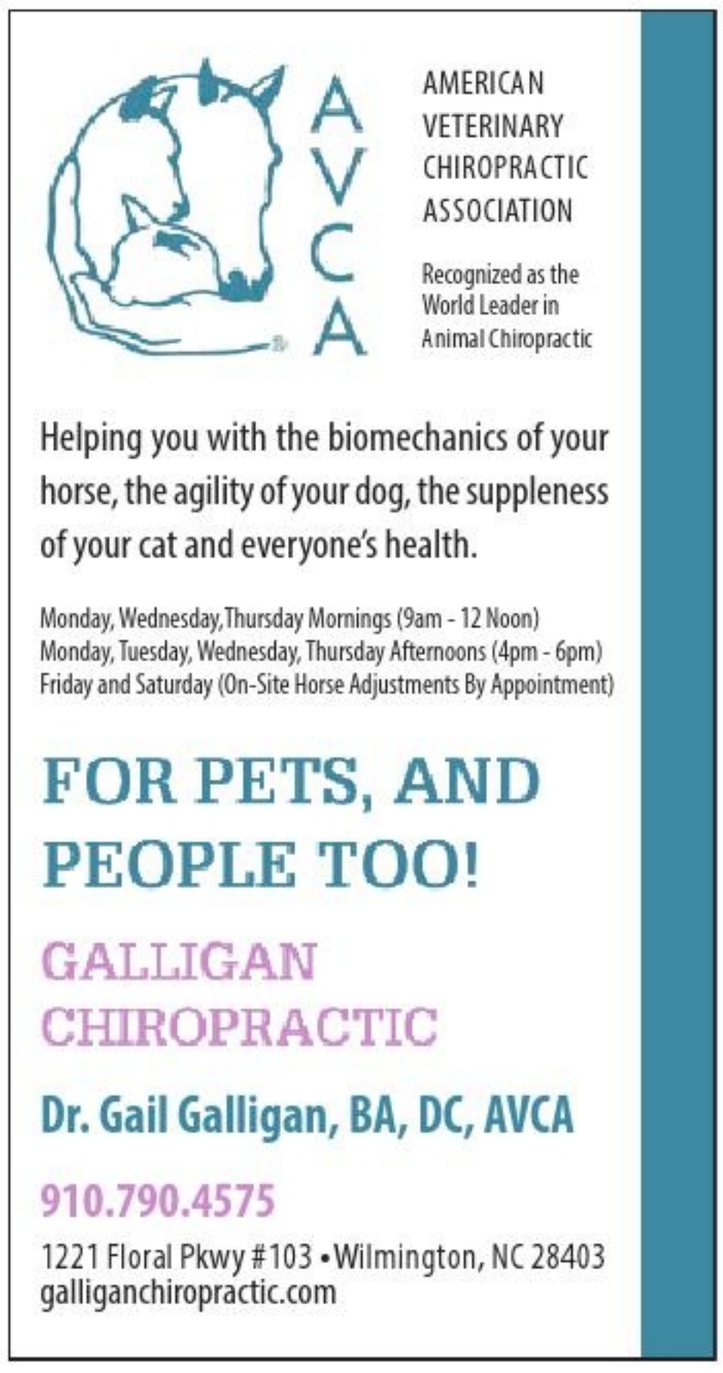
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ALMANAC

May

By Rosetta Fawley

"Too much of a good thing . . .
can be wonderful."
— Mae West

A Sprig in Your Step

It's Kentucky Derby month. The aptly named "Kentucky Colonel" is a favorite mint cultivar for Derby refreshment. Early spring or fall is best for planting mint, but if you haven't got around to it yet, don't worry — grows like a weed. Borrow some from your neighbor's garden (they'll be grateful). Or plant some now, using a container, and enjoy a refreshing julep all through the summer. Mint likes afternoon shade; most types prefer a damp part of the garden.

The word "julep" is of Persian origin, from "gulab," meaning rose water.

Mint julep recipes abound in the South. Spearmint trumps peppermint. Opinion is divided over whether to muddle the mint with sugar or simply enjoy the aroma of the mint in a garnish. The Almanac suggests trying both to find your preference. Try different types of mint too. After a few samplings, the finer details won't matter very much, but do try to remember this: The only vessel for the mint julep is a sterling silver cup.

Mint Julep

1 sprig spearmint leaves
1 tbsp simple syrup
Crushed ice
2 oz favorite bourbon

Pull three or four mint leaves from the bottom of the sprig and place them in a julep cup with the syrup. Gently press the mint against the inside of the cup with a teaspoon to release the leaves' flavor. Fill the cup with crushed ice and pour the bourbon over the top. Put the remaining mint sprig in the ice with a flourish. Stir if desired. Follow the advice of bon vivant Eugene Walter, who said of a 1912 receipt for a Bluegrass Julep, "Sip slowly, don't use a straw. Between sips, think of someone you love."

Happy birthday to Grace Jones, who played May Day in the James Bond film *A View To a Kill*. Miss Jones' birthday is May 19.

May Flowers for Mum

"Ne'er cast a clout till May be out." The old English proverb means don't remove any rags, or layers of clothing, for the lucky ones among us, until the month of May is over. Some say it means until the hawthorn, also known as may, is blooming. Either way it's a pretty saying, but don't follow it in Zone 8 — it would be hazardous to be wrapped in fleece and furs in the balmy weather of this month.

"Here we go gathering nuts in May," runs the refrain from the old children's game. Spot the deliberate mistake — what nuts could be gathered in May? None, not in the Northern Hemisphere anyway. It seems the words are most likely an adulteration of "knots of may" from the tradition of gathering hawthorn flowers to celebrate May Day.

In the language of flowers, hawthorn represents hope. For Mother's Day on May 10, make up an arrangement of deep pink roses (appreciation), gladioli (admiration), stocks and honeysuckle (bonds of affection, love and generous and devoted affection). Or, fashion a garden of moss (maternal love).

And this was on the sixth morning of May,
Which May had painted with his soft showers
This garden full of leaves and of flowers;
And craft of man's hand so curiously
Had arrayed this garden, truly,
That never was there garden of such price,
But if it were the very Paradise.

— From *The Franklin's Tale*
by Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400)

Did Someone Say BLT?

Historians differ over the origin of the word mayonnaise, but the Almanac thinks it could have been invented for the month that shares its name. What better accompaniment for a long al fresco lunch in the shade of the magnolia trees? Salad, cold chicken, charcuterie, cheese, fresh crusty bread and a crisp white wine. For the best mayonnaise of all, make your own: egg yolks, olive oil, vinegar and whisking. Go Dutch — or Belgian — and try it with French fries. Sublime.

May 2015

Arts Calendar

Musical Revue

5/2

5/1 Birding Cruise
10 a.m. One-hour tour aboard *The Shamrock* with Captain Joey Abbate. Admission: $25–35. Blockade Runner Beach Resort Dock, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-2838 or www.nccoast.org.

5/1 Airlie Concert
6–8 p.m. Jack Jack 180, a high-energy blend of rock, pop and dance. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

5/1 Live Music
7 p.m. Huka Entertainment presents country music singer Brett Eldredge. Admission: $32–35. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

5/1 Spring Concert
7:30 p.m. The Brunswick Concert Band performs under the direction of George Boberg. Free. Hatch Auditorium, 100 Caswell Road, Oak Island. Info: (910) 253-1643 or www.brunswickbands.org.

5/1 & 2 UpScale ReSale Design Challenge
6–9 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday). Twenty interior design teams compete to repurpose items from local Habitat ReStores, creating 10 x 10 vignettes. VIP Preview Party and Design Awards to be held Friday; show and merchandise sale on Saturday. Admission: $35–40 (preview party & sale); $5 (sale only). Proceeds benefit Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity. Schwartz Center, CFCC, 601 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearhabitat.org.

5/1 & 2 Pender County Spring Fest
6–10 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Saturday).

Robert Cray Live

5/3

Homegrown, handmade festival featuring food, music and dancing, arts and crafts, children's activities, area vendors and all-day entertainment. Pender County Courthouse Square, 100 South Wright Street, Burgaw. Info: (910) 259-4844 or www.visitpender.com/calendarofevents.

5/1–3 Wine & Food Festival
7–10 p.m. (Friday); 2–5 p.m. (Saturday); 1–4 p.m. (Sunday). Epicurean festival hosted by Bellamy Mansion and Wilmington Wine features samplings of more than 200 wines and beers plus scrumptious bites from locally owned restaurants, caterers and food trucks. Admission: $80 (3-Day Pass); $35 (Cocktail Party); $45 (Grand Tasting); $10 (Street Eats). Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.wilmingtonwineandfood.com.

5/2 River to Sea Bike Ride
8:30 a.m. Casual-paced bicycle ride from downtown Wilmington to Wrightsville Beach. Refreshments and drawings for prizes to follow. Free. 12 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.rivertoseabikeway.com.

5/2 Great Strides 5K
9 a.m. National family-oriented 5k/fundraiser for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation featuring children's activities, food and festivities. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 664-0145 or fightcf.cff.org.

5/2 Safari Hunt
9 a.m. Underwater scavenger hunt through a shipwreck includes $4,000 in prizes. Cook-out to follow. Admission: $20–25. Liberty Ship Marina, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 392-4386 or www.aquaticsafaris.com/safari-hunt.

Magic Show with James Galea

5/9

5/2 Musical Revue
2 & 7:30 p.m. "In the Mood," a show that recreates the best popular music and songs of the late 1930s and the1940s, features In the Mood singers and dancers plus the sensational String of Pearl's Orchestra. Admission: $22–40. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

5/2 Musical Comedy Benefit
4 p.m. Pianist Barry David Salwen performs non-standards, among them "Ode to the Lost Lamb," "Sort of Für Elise" (with apologies to Beethoven), and a modified version of Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer." Comedic recital to benefit the Cat Adoption Team, a non-profit cat rescue organization based in Wilmington. Tickets: $12. UNCW's Beckwith Hall. Info: (910) 799-8682 or catabove.com/catbeco.html.

5/2 Derby4Dogs
4–7 p.m. Charity event hosted by Paws4People to raise awareness and funds to train assistance dogs. Event includes cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction and coverage of the Kentucky Derby. Admission: $50. City Club of Wilmington, 23 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 431-0698 or paws4people.org.

5/2 Kentucky Derby Party
4–8 p.m. Kentucky Derby-themed fundraising event featuring televised race coverage, horseshoes, mint juleps, Southern fare, silent auction, live music, big hats and garden party attire. Admission: $75. Proceeds benefit Poplar Grove Plantation's school programs and raise awareness for the Southeast Coast Region Equine Rescue League. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org/events.

Acme Art Studios Art Opening & Reception

5/22

5/3 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. Uncle Hairy kicks off the "Boogie in the Park" summer concert series with rock and soul hits. Bring blankets and snacks. Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

5/3 Live Music
6 p.m. The Penguin presents the five-time Grammy-winning Robert Cray Band (blues) joined by Shemekia Copeland. Admission: $30–35. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

5/4 Word Weavers
7–9 p.m. Christian writers' group meeting. Life Point Church, 3534 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 619-7344 or sondradron@bellsouth.net.

5/5 Live Music
6 p.m. The Penguin and Huka Entertainment present reggae ska punkers the Dirty Heads along with Miami-based hip hop collective Mayday. Admission: $27.50–32.50. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

5/6 Speak Easy Wilmington
8 p.m. Storytelling competition for any and all, every first Wednesday of the month. See Facebook for monthly themes. Fiction or nonfiction; no poetry. Five Star Tavern, 106 North Second Street, Wilmington. Info: www.facebook.com/groups/speakeasywilmington.

5/7 Bird Talk & Walk
9:30–11:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden to learn about painted buntings, then take a stroll through downtown Southport to view them in nature. Free. Dry Street Pub & Pizza,

101 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/7 Women of Achievement Awards
5:30 p.m. Thirtieth anniversary fundraiser for the Lower Cape Fear YWCA honoring the accomplishments of women and young leaders in the Port City. Event features social hour, refreshments and award ceremony. Proceeds benefit the Lower Cape Fear YMCA. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 799-6820 or www.ywca-lowercapefear.org.

5/7 Turtle Walk & Talk
8–9:30 p.m. Tag along with the Wrightsville Beach Sea Turtle Project and federation education staff on a nighttime beach stroll. See a real sea turtle carapace, hear stories about resident turtles, learn how to build your own nest, and find out how you can help resident sea turtles. Suggested donation: $10. Coastal Education Center, 309 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: www.nccoast.org.

5/7–10 Live Theatre
8 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Big Dawg Productions presents *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, a play based on the classic novel by Ken Kesey about a charming rogue who serves a short sentence in a mental institution rather than prison. Admission: $5–22. Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 367-5237 or www.bigdawgproductions.org.

5/8 & 9 Plein Air Art Event
9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Friday); 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (Saturday). Watch local artists capture the scenic beauty of Wrightsville Beach in two dimensions. Site maps available; works for sale at the end of the painting session on Saturday. Free. Wrightsville Beach Museum of History, 303 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or www.wbmuseum.com.

5/8 & 9 Art Exhibit
7–10 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Saturday). Jazzcars Gallery features works by Christopher Reid in the gallery's grand opening. Reid is an award-winning local artist specializing in original pastel and watercolor paintings, with more than 100 works for sale. Free. A portion of sales will go to Habitat for Humanity. Jazzcars, 2144 Wrightsville Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 833-5303 or jazzcarsgallery.com.

5/8–10 SilverArts Juried Art Show
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 12–4 p.m. (Sunday). Statewide juried art competition, a component of the Senior Games by the Sea, for all artists age 50 and older. Includes exhibition and sale featuring a variety of paintings, pottery, sculpture, jewelry and woodwork. Admission: $15. The ArtWorks, 200 Willard Street, Wilmington. Info: www.theartworks.co.

5/9 Bird Program & Plant Sale
9:15–10:30 a.m. (program); 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (plant sale). Join Wild Bird & Garden for a free program about hummingbirds, then shop the native plant sale for a variety of plants that will attract them to your garden. Wild Bird & Garden, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/9 LAMB Spring Event
10 a.m. Fundraiser to help people with intellectual disabilities features an All-Star game made up of players from the Special Olympics and Miracle League. Family-friendly activities and highlights include pony rides; train rides; face painting; car show; large vehicles from the police, fire and EMS departments; raffle; kickball game and closing ceremony. Proceeds benefit the LAMB Foundation of NC. Miracle Field, Olsen Park, 5510 Olsen Park Lane, Wilmington. Info: www.lambnc.org.

5/9 Family Science Saturday
10–11 a.m. (preschool); 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. (ages 5–12). This week's theme, "Incredible Insects," will give children a bug's-eye view as they explore how insects communicate, what they build and why bees dance. They will also make glow-in-the-dark butterfly and firefly. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

5/9 Rose Garden Tour
10 a.m. – 4 p.m. The Wilmington Cape Fear Rose Society hosts its annual garden tour featuring nine local rose gardens. Free. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.wcfrs.blogspot.com.

5/9 Magic Show
7:30 p.m. James Galea's *I Hate Rabbits* is a high-energy magic concert featuring cutting-edge style fused with a wicked sense of humor and award-winning sleight-of-hand projected live onto large screens. Admission: $20–36. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

5/10 Mother's Day Jazz Brunch
11:30 a.m. Enjoy a delicious plated brunch with live entertainment by Grenoldo Frazier. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com/sunday-brunch.html.

5/10 Broadway Brunch
1 p.m. Opera Wilmington hosts *Opera Wilmington Sings Broadway*, pairing delightful musical performances with delicious cuisine. Emceed by Phil Furia, the program will feature a Mother's Day champagne brunch and music from the golden age of musical theater. Admission: $75. Terraces on Sir Tyler, 1826 Sir Tyler Drive, Wilmington. Info: (212) 795-5503 or www.opera-wilmington.org.

5/12 Legos at the Library
3:30–4:30 p.m. Kid-friendly activity for elementary schoolers to practice problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, visualizing 3D structures, communication and motor skills. Free. Myrtle Grove Public Library, 5155 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6393 or www.nhclibrary.org.

5/12 Live Music
8 p.m. The Penguin presents Australian multi-instrumentalist Xavier Rudd and his all-star band, The United Nations. Admission: $22–32. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: www.brooklynartsnc.com.

5/13 Airlie Bird Walk
8–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden's Jill Peleuses and Airlie Gardens environmental educators for a bird walk. Admission: $3–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/13 Public Education Program
7–8:30 p.m. *A Bird's Eye View of North Carolina's Coast*. Walker Golder, deputy director for Audubon North Carolina, shares his world class wildlife photography and experiences as a fishing guide and director. Suggested donation: $10. Coastal Education Center, 309 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: www.nccoast.org.

5/13 & 27 Black River Nature Cruise
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Four-hour nature cruise down the Black River narrated by coastal ecologist and author Andy Woods. Admission: $40–55. 101 South Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1611 or www.cfrboats.com.

5/14 Disabled Fishing Tournament
7:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Got-Em-On Live Bait Club provides a day of fishing, food and fun for those with disabilities. Awards ceremony follows. Admission: Free. Kure Beach Fishing Pier, 100 Atlanta Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 367-9015 or www.got-em-on.com.

5/14 Jazz at the Mansion
6:30–8:30 p.m. Grenoldo Frazier kicks off the "Jazz at the Mansion" concert series on the Bellamy lawn. Beer and wine cash bar available. Admission: $12. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

5/14 & 15 National Theatre
2–6 p.m. (Thursday); 6 –10 p.m. (Friday). OLLI presents George Bernard Shaw's epic fairytale and philosophical meditation, *Man and Superman*. Admission: $18–20. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, 620 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3195 or www.uncw.edu/olli.

5/14–17 Children's Theater
7 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association Children's Theatre presents *Cats* the musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Admission: $12. Hannah Block Second Street Stage, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.wilmingtoncommunityarts.org.

5/15 Airlie Concert
6–8 p.m. 'Shine performs rock & roll classics. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

5/15 Kids' Night Out
6–9 p.m. Fun and games for children ages 7–13 include arts and crafts, computer games, bingo, Lego building contest, sports activities, refreshments and more. Pre-registration required. Free. Maides Park, 1101 Manly Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-7867 or www.wilmingtonrecreation.com.

5/15 & 16 Ballet
7 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. (Saturday). City Ballet of Wilmington presents *Coppelia: A Romantic Comedy* featuring a sparkling orchestral score by Leo Delibes and choreography by 19th century master Arthur St. Leone. Admission: $10–25. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

5/15–17 Seaglass Salvage Market
9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday); 12–5 p.m. (Sunday). Indoor/outdoor eclectic market featuring upcycled and repurposed furniture, home décor and accessories, garden and yard décor, jewelry, chocolates, salvage art, mid century modern pieces and industrial salvage items for DIY projects. 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway, Leland. Info: www.seaglassmarket.com.

5/15–17 Rims on the River
9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Saturday); 12 p.m. (Sunday). Vintage car, hot rod and motorcycle show featuring live entertainment, pre-show parties, vendor exhibits, a cruise day and awards. Admission: Free; $10–15 to exhibit. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: www.rimsontheriver.com.

5/15–17 Greek Festival
11 a.m. – 10 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. (Sunday). Annual festival celebrating the culture, faith and heritage of the Greek community. Authentic food, music, dancing, church tour, cultural presentations, souvenirs, cooking demonstrations and a Greek-style marketplace. Proceeds benefit the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and other local charities. St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church, 608 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 394-4444 or www.stnicholasgreekfest.com.

5/16 Kids Fishing Tournament
7 a.m. – 12 p.m. Step Up For Soldiers hosts its tenth annual fishing tournament for children of active duty or reserves in all branches of the military. Fishing equipment, bait, breakfast, lunch, snacks, prizes and gifts provided. Free admission. Kure Beach Fishing Pier, 100 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (570) 971-0553 or www.stepupforsoldiers.org.

5/16 Boat Safety Class
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. The Cape Fear Sail & Power Squadron offers a comprehensive introductory boating course, which satisfies the N.C. safe boating education requirement for anyone under 26 years of age. Admission: $70. Cape Fear Community College, 411 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearboatingcourse.org.

5/16 Bird Program
9:15–10:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden to learn about painted buntings and how you can attract them to your yard. Free. Temptations Everyday Gourmet, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/16 Historic Cemetery Tour
10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery led by Robin Triplett. Admission: $10. Oakdale Cemetery, 520 North Fifteenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-5682 or www.oakdalecemetery.org.

5/16 Street Arts Festival
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Interactive arts festival at Carolina Beach celebrating visual, culinary and performing arts with vendor shops, interactive demos, educational programs, community art projects, food and live entertainment. Free. Cape Fear Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (610) 909-7643 or www.cbstreetartsfestival.org.

5/16 Battleship Program
1–4 p.m. Battleship *North Carolina* presents "Showboats: Systems & Design," a presentation by Lt. Colonel Ken Rittenmeyer (USAF retired) followed by two hours of exploring the shipboard with explanations of shipboard systems such as armor, fuel and propulsion. Admission: $35–40. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

5/16 Spring Choral Show
1:30 & 7:30 p.m. Concert features dancers and the Cape Fear Chordsmen Barbershop

Chorus. This year's event is dedicated to nine local non-profit pet rescue organizations. Admission: $20. Scottish Rite Temple, 1414 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearchordsmen.com.

5/16 Native Plant Sale
2–4 p.m. Duane Truscott of My Garden Plants Company with a variety of native plants for sale that will attract birds and butterflies to your garden. Wild Bird & Garden Sidewalk, 3501 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/16 Girls' Choir Concert
5 p.m. Free concert presented by the Girls' Choir of Wilmington sharing repertoire from their 2015 Charlotte Spring Tour. Selections include Vivaldi, Handel and Schubert. Donations accepted. Proceeds benefit Girls' Choir of Wilmington. Winter Park Presbyterian Church, 4501 Wrightsville Avenue, Wilmington. Info: www.girlschoirofwilmington.org.

5/16 Hope Gala
6 p.m. Annual fundraiser/celebration for the Junior Diabetes Research Foundation features cocktail reception, guest speakers, silent and live auctions, dinner, entertainment and dancing. Admission: $200. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 509-9899 or www.jdrfhopegala.org.

5/17 Birding Kayak Excursion
8–11:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden and local guide company Mahanaim Adventures for a morning of kayaking and birding at Moores Creek. Registration: $45. Wild Bird & Garden, 3500 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/17 Studio Series
12–2 p.m. Artist Kathleen McLeod leads a workshop on painting wooden birdhouses. Admission: $15. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/17 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. Central Park Band performs classic rock, pop and dance hits. Bring blankets and snacks. Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

5/17 Live Music
6 p.m. Huka Entertainment presents American singer/songwriter Jason Isbell; Craig Finn opens. Admission: $35–40. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

5/18 Symphony Golf Classic
8 a.m. Annual best ball golf tournament/fundraiser hosted by the Wilmington Symphony. Registration includes breakfast and snacks, luncheon and awards ceremony. Admission: $375. Proceeds benefit the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra and its youth education programs. Eagle Point Golf Club, 8131 Bald Eagle Lane, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.wilmingtonsymphony.org/golf-classic.html.

5/18 Lecture
7:30 p.m. Captain Skippy Winner on the current efforts to preserve the Carolina Beach Inlet, with a little help and history from Elaine Henson. Free. Federal Point History Center, 1121A North Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-0502 or www.federalpointhistory.org.

5/20 Bird Talk
8:30–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden for a stroll around Southport's historic district to view birds and their habitats. Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

5/21 Evening Historic Tour
6 p.m., 6:30 p.m., 7 p.m. & 7:30 p.m. The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society will hold evening tours of the historic Latimer House featuring costumed guides. Admission: $10. Latimer House, 126 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-0492 or www.hslcf.org.

5/21 Lecture
6:30 p.m. Architectural historian Ed Turberg on "Church Architecture." Suggested donation: $5. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

5/21–24 Live Theater
7:30 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association presents *Singin' in the Rain*, offering a lighthearted depiction of Hollywood in the 1920s. Admission: $15–30. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

5/22 Southport Chirp
9–10 a.m. Informal gathering of bird and birding enthusiasts. Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

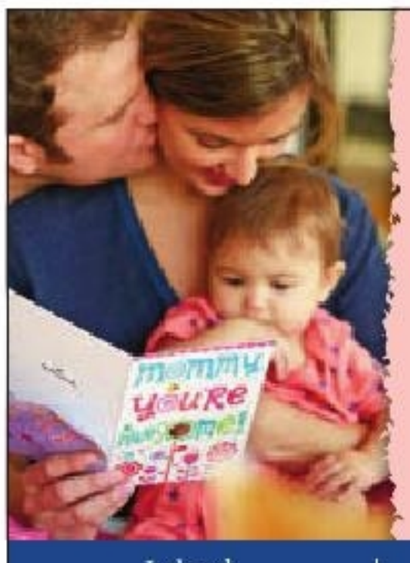
5/22 Gallery Walk
6–9 p.m. Self-guided tours of galleries, art spaces and studios in Downtown Wilmington. Free. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

5/22 Music on the Town
6–9 p.m. Machine Gun (rock & roll) kicks off the "Music on the Town" summer concert series performing. Activities for kids; snacks available for purchase. Free. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-5131 or www.mayfairetown.com.

5/22 Art Exhibit Opening
6–9 p.m. Opening reception for *Wilmington's Acme Art to Present* exhibition featuring an eclectic collection of work by eight North Carolina artists. On view through June 19. Acme Art Studios, 711 North Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 232-0027 or acme-artstudios.com.

5/22–24 Shakespeare on the Green
8 p.m. *Taming of the Shrew*. Shakespearean theater, al fresco, performed by the Cape Fear Shakespeare Youth Company. Also runs 5/29–31. Free. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-2878 or www.greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

5/23 Boat Safety Class
9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Learn the challenges and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5/23 & 24 Orange Street ArtsFest
10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Saturday); 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Sunday). Twentieth anniversary downtown arts festival includes exhibitors, art show and sale, pottery demos, food vendors and live entertainment. Free. Second & Orange Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1788 or www.thalian.org.

5/24 Hangar Party
6 p.m. Fundraiser/celebration hosted by the Leroy W. Homer Jr. Foundation features silent auction, special aircraft, live music by the Mango Band and catering by the Catch food truck. Admission: $75. Proceeds help young adults pursue aviation careers. Aviatmall, Wilmington International Airport, 2240 Control Tower Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.leroyhomer.org.

5/24 Memorial Day Movie
8 p.m. Enjoy a patriotic movie screening on the lawn in honor of Memorial Day. Beer, wine and snacks available for purchase. Suggested donation: $5. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

5/24 Movie at the Lake
8:45 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor movie screening of *Planes: Fire & Rescue* (2014, PG, 83 min.). Popcorn, soda and candy available for purchase. Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 & Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasure-island.org.

5/25 Memorial Day Observance
6 p.m. Remember those who gave their lives in service. Program includes military musical arrangements by an Armed Forces Band, 21-gun salute, and the Executive Director of Battleship *North Carolina*, Captain Terry A. Bragg. Free. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

5/27–30 Battleship Crew Reunion
The USS *North Carolina* Battleship Association hosts an annual reunion for the Battleship's crew and their families. Reunion activities are open only to those registered. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com/Events/CrewReunion.

5/27–30 Blue Marlin Tournament
Annual fishing tournament includes an opening captain's party, mid-tournament party at the gazebo, and closing awards ceremony with food, live music and open bar. Wrightsville Beach Marina & Yacht Club, 6 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 262-5566 or capefearbluemarlintournament.com.

5/28 Trunk Show
4–7 p.m. Premier residential event hosted by Big Sky Design showcases the newest collections from to-the-trade resources. Enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres with presentations by Visual Comfort Lighting, Thibaut Wallpaper, Duralee Fabrics and Kravet Fabrics. Attendees receive gift bags and 15% discount vouchers. Big Sky Design, 4037 Masonboro Loop Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 793-3992 or www.bigskydesignonline.com.

5/28 Wilma Dash
6 p.m. All-female 5K hosted by *Wilma* magazine. After party and women's health fair to follow. Shoe donations will be collected for One Step Beyond. Admission: $40–45. Proceeds benefit the Pretty in Pink Foundation. Coastline Convention Center, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-8600 or wilmadash.com.

5/29 Music on the Town
6–9 p.m. Massive Grass performs bluegrass hits on the lawn. Includes activities for kids; snacks available for purchase. Free. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-5131 or www.mayfairetown.com.

5/29 & 30 Summer Plant Sale
9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Annual summer plant sale features plants grown by members of the Hobby Greenhouse Club. A portion of proceeds go toward scholarships for area community college horticulture students. Forest Hills Hobby Greenhouse, 2318 Metts Avenue, Wilmington. Info: www.hobbybgreenhouse-club.org.

5/29 & 30 Beach Wrestling Championship
7–10 p.m. (Friday); 9:30 a.m. (Saturday). USA Beach Wrestling Championships. Wrestlers of all ages compete for national and state titles. Weigh-ins take place at the The Lazy Pirate on Friday, followed by food, fun and live music. Saturday includes a day of wrestling on the beach with athletes from across the U.S., including members of the All Marine Team. Admission: $20/individual; $40/team. The Lazy Pirate, 701 North Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: www.ncwrestling.org.

5/30 Battleship Alive
8 a.m. – 5 p.m. The Living History Crew provides insight into the daily life and routine of the crew aboard the USS *North Carolina* by explaining the duties specific to each sailor's ratings and demonstrating activities that occurred aboard the ship. Admission: $6–14. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

5/30 Riverfront Arts Festival
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Riverfront arts festival hosted by the North Brunswick Chamber of Commerce features live music, arts and crafts vendors, kids activities, storytelling, food vendors and 50/50 raffle. Free. Brunswick Riverwalk, 580 River Road, Belville. Info: (910) 383-0553 or www.nbchamberofcommerce.com.

5/30 Alice's Pretend Tea Party
10:30 a.m. The New Hanover County Library celebrates the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* with a pretend tea party featuring stories and games for children ages 4–8. Free. NHC Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6372 or www.nhclibrary.org.

5/31 Movie at the Lake
8:45 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor movie screening of *Matilda* (1996, PG, 102 min.). Popcorn, soda and candy available for purchase. Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 & Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasure-island.org.

Salt MAGAZINE

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76	Classic Designs of Wilmington
25	Coastal Urge
42	CoolSweats
44	Crabby Chic
32	Craige & Fox, PLLC
18	Crescent Moon
24	Cunningham & Company Mortgage Bankers
66	Davis Community, The
30	Debby Gomulka Designs
28	Deeply Rooted Gardens
66	Dog Pros to Go
44	En Vie Interiors
30	Fasse Bldgs.
BC	Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery
72	Fibrenew
28	First South Bank
25	Fisherman's Wife, The
66	Galligan Chiropractic
72	Glass Guru, The
21	Glen Meade Center for Women's Health
27	Glo MedSpa
18	Golden Gallery, The
30	Great Outdoor Provision Co.
30	Holmes Security Systems
3	Hubbard Kitchen, Bath & Lighting Showroom
26	Island Passage
40	James Zisa Attorneys, P.A.
38	Jonkheer Jewelry
66	Kathy Cooper Floor Cloths
44	Kelly's Cabinets & Repair Co.
70	Kendall's Hallmark
72	Krista A. Bronisas, MS, LMFT
27	Laura Dotson Designs
36	Lee Mims Studio
7	Lisa Sledzik, Realtor.Broker
18	Loft on Front, The
40	Logan Homes
70	Lou's Flower World & Vintage Market
74	Lovey's Natural Foods & Cafe
31	Luxe Home Interiors
74	Milner's Cafe & Catering
2	Nest Fine Gifts and Interiors
6	New Hanover Regional Medical Center
7	Opulence of Southern Pines
25	Otero Family, Cosmetic & Implant Dentistry
74	Our Crêpes & More
42	Palm Garden
20	Paysage Home
22	PMG Research of Wilmington
78	Port City Java
43	Precious Gems and Jewelry
33	Quarter Moon Books, Gifts & Wine Bar
22	Re-Bath of Wilmington
IFC	REEDS Jewelers
16	Sotheby's International Realty
38	Summit Plastic Surgery & Dermatology
25	Taste the Olive Market & Cafe
20	Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.
18	Tin & Oak
66	Transplanted Garden, The
11	UNC Greensboro, M.A. Liberal Studies
32	Uptown Market
1	Vance Young, Intracoastal Realty
76	VanDavis Aveda
38	Verde Painting
36	Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry
33	Wilmington Art Association
44	Wilmington Blind, Shutter & Closet Company
36	Wrightsville Beach Museum of History

5/31 Sky Quest
1:30, 2:30 & 3:30 p.m. Take a virtual journey through the solar system and explore the world of astronomy in Cape Fear Museum's digital planetarium. Parental participation required. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday Wrightsville Beach Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offers a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Opens 5/18. Municipal Grounds, Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Monday Bird Walk
9–11 a.m. Join the Wrightsville Beach Bird Stewards for a guided walk around a shorebird nesting colony. Learn about the various birds that have chosen to nest on the beach and watch the nesting season unfold. Binoculars, sunscreen and water recommended. Free. Public Beach Access #43 Gazebo, Jack Parker Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: wbbirdsteward.blogspot.com.

Monday – Wednesday Cinematique Films
7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. See website for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Tuesday Wine Tasting
6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting plus wine and small plate specials all night. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglass-winebar.com.

Wednesday T'ai Chi at CAM
12–1 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to any level of participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday Poplar Grove Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of the historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, landscaping and bedding plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade art and craft items. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday Live Jazz Piano
3 p.m. Have a glass of wine or beer and unwind from the week with original jazz played by James Jarvis. Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

Friday & Saturday Dinner Theatre
7 p.m. TheatreNOW performs *Raney* by Clyde Edgerton, a Southern comedy dinner show. Admission: $12–38. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Saturday Riverfront Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artists, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Products include fresh produce, herbs, flowers, meats, baked goods, canned items, wine, art and more. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowtown.com/events/farmers-market.

Saturday Carolina Beach Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh produce, wines, meats, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Opens 5/16. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 & Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 431-8122 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday Literary Walking Tour
1:30 p.m. Explore the rich culture of this talented southern town with a 90-minute walking tour of the literary history of downtown Wilmington. Tour locations from books, poems and plays, walk the streets of your favorite novels, and stand where Oscar Wilde stood when he lectured. Admission: $8. Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

Saturday Wine & Beer Tasting
2 – 4 p.m. Free wine and craft beer tasting. Taste the Olive, The Forum, 1125-D Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-6457 or www.tastetheolive.com.

Saturday Super Saturday Fun Time
3 p.m. Live theater and variety show. Tickets: $8. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Saturday Port City Playwrights
11 a.m. A guild of local playwrights and screenwriters meet and support writers in all levels of development, giving them an opportunity to present their work for feedback, share production opportunities and host guest speakers. McAlister's Deli, 740 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: portcity-playwright.wix.com/pcpp.

Sunday Bluewater Waterfront Music
4–7 p.m. Summer concerts on the waterfront patio. 5/3: Back of the Boat (yacht rock); 5/10: The Other Guys (acoustic rock, pop & Americana); 5/17: Overtyme (classic rock & beach); 5/24: Mark Roberts (motown & classic rock); 5/31: Machine Gun (hard rock). Admission: Free. Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewaterdining.com.

To add a calendar event, please contact Ashley at ashley@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

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k_bronisas@yahoo.com
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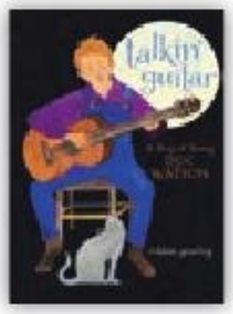
N.C. Writer's Notebook

By Sandra Redding

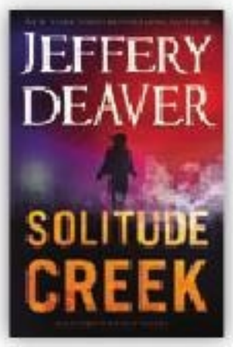
Spring's last-born darling, clear-eyed, sweet,
pauses a moment with white twinkling feet
and golden locks in breezy play, half teasing
and half tender to repeat her song of "May."
— Susan Coolidge

Upcoming Events

May 7 (Thursday, 7 p.m.) Mary Kratt, prize-winning poet of Charlotte, will join poet Steve Cushman and local prose writers Miriam Herin and yours truly, Sandra Redding, to discuss "Writing a Memoir in Poetry or Prose" at Scuppernong Books, Greensboro. Kratt calls her latest publication, *Watch Where You Walk: New and Selected Poems*, a lyrical memoir. Info: www.scuppernongbooks.com.



May 9 (Saturday, 11 a.m.). Robbin Gourley, author and illustrator of children's books, will introduce her latest, *Talkin' Guitar: A Story of Young Doc Watson* at Scuppernong Books, Greensboro. Her words and breathtaking illustrations pay tribute to the North Carolina musician who won seven Grammy Awards. After talking about the blind boy who loved music, Gourley will entertain with guitar tunes. Fun for all ages. Info: www.scuppernongbooks.com



May 13 (Wednesday, 7 p.m.). International best-selling writer Jeffery Deaver, author of over thirty books, will introduce *Solitude Creek*, his latest mystery, at Flyleaf Books, Chapel Hill. This popular North Carolina speaker will talk, answer questions and autograph copies. Info: www.flyleafbooks.com

May 17–21 (Friday through Tuesday). The 2015 Blue Ridge Mountains Christian Writers Conference will be held at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville. This annual event offers training and networking events for both seasoned and aspiring writers and speakers. Here participants interact with editors, agents and professional writers in outstanding workshops and classes. Be inspired by the quiet serenity; sharpen your writing skills. Some scholarships available.

Info: ridgecrestconferencecenter.org/programs

Congratulations

Jennifer Whitaker of Greensboro won the 2015 Brittingham Prize in Poetry for her collection, *The Blue Hour*. She will receive $1,000 and her book will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press. The next deadline for entries: September 15, 2015.

Joan S. McLean of Siler City won the 37th New Millennium Award for her poem, *Remember This*. She received $1,000 and her work will be published in New Millennium Writings.

James Tate of Greensboro won the third annual Dorothy and Wedel Nilsen Prize for his first novel, *Academy Gothic*. He received $1,000 and his book will be published by the National Book Foundation.

A wide variety of books by North Carolinians debuted recently: *John Prine: In Spite of Himself* (University of Texas Press), by Eddie Huffman of Burlington, is the true story of an exceptional songwriter whose music sparked the careers of many, including Bette Midler and Bob Dylan; *Night of the Hatchet* (Lulu), by A. W. Hammock of Wilmington, is a real page turner involving a deadly terrorist cell and the hero who pursues them . . . *The Niburian Sequence* (Xlibris), by Gary Furnas of Lincolnton contains high adventure and scientific intrigue, *Masters of the Weird Tale: Fred Chappell* (Centipede Press) is the largest single collection of Chappell's writing: twenty stories, one novel (*Dagon*) and numerous poems. Weirdly wonderful illustrations by David Ho and Fritz Janschka embellish this unique treasure.

Writing Lesson

O.Henry magazine recently hosted one of the most illustrious literary events in Greensboro's history: an evening with five of the state's top literary luminaries. Here, they share personal anecdotes and advice for aspiring writers.

Jim Dodson, editor of *O.Henry*, *PineStraw* and *Salt*, remembers the advice his dad gave him: "Write a book that you would want to read." It seems to have worked pretty well for the best-selling author.

Wiley Cash of Wilmington finished writing his first novel, *A Land More Kind than Home*, in 2003. Though it was considered a good novel, Wiley continued to study, seek advice from other writers and spent hours rewriting for nine years. When finally published in 2012, reviewers declared it a *great* novel.

Clyde Edgerton, author of fourteen books, most sprinkled with humor, teaches writing at UNC Wilmington, where he encourages students "to take no advice that does not make sense to them, to try to observe their world as if never seen, to cause the reader to SEE and to avoid adverbs when possible."

Frances Mayes of Hillsborough and Cortona, Italy, strives to create a strong sense of place for her books, whether she's writing about Georgia or Italy. Grateful for her own success, she frequently praises the work of other writers. During the *O.Henry* event, she charmed fellow honorees by purchasing their books and asking for their autographs.

Jill McCorkle, a patient wordsmith, confesses, "My writing process often involves a lot of note taking, every day jotting down thoughts and ideas and in the evening putting the scraps away for later perusal."

What's your writing secret? Send it to sanredd@earthlink.net.

Greensboro writer Sandra Redding's novel, Naomi Wise: A Cautionary Tale, *is a riveting story about heartbreak and hope in a Quaker community.*

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Port City People

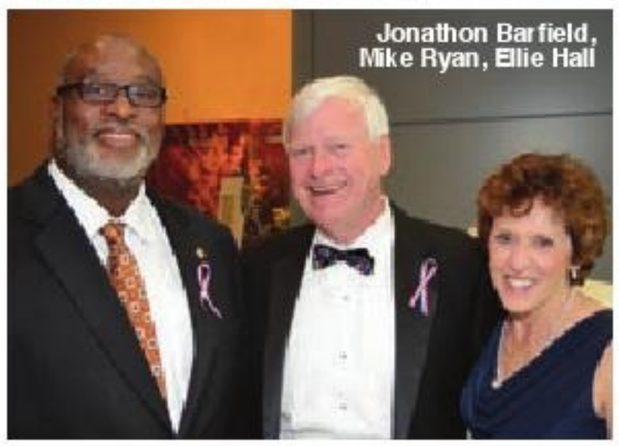
Cape Fear Museum's Salute to Our Stars & Stripes

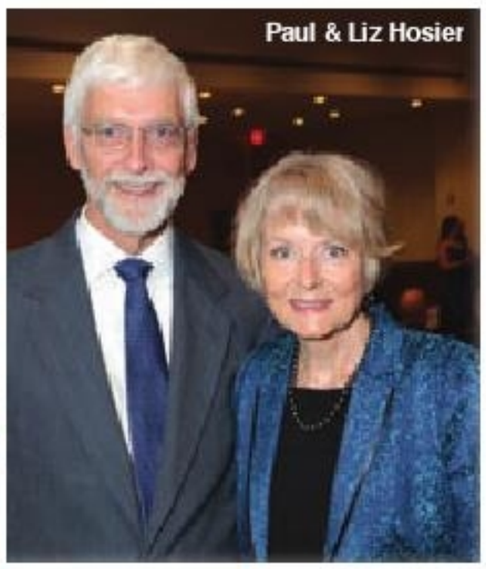
Union Station

Friday, March 13, 2015

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

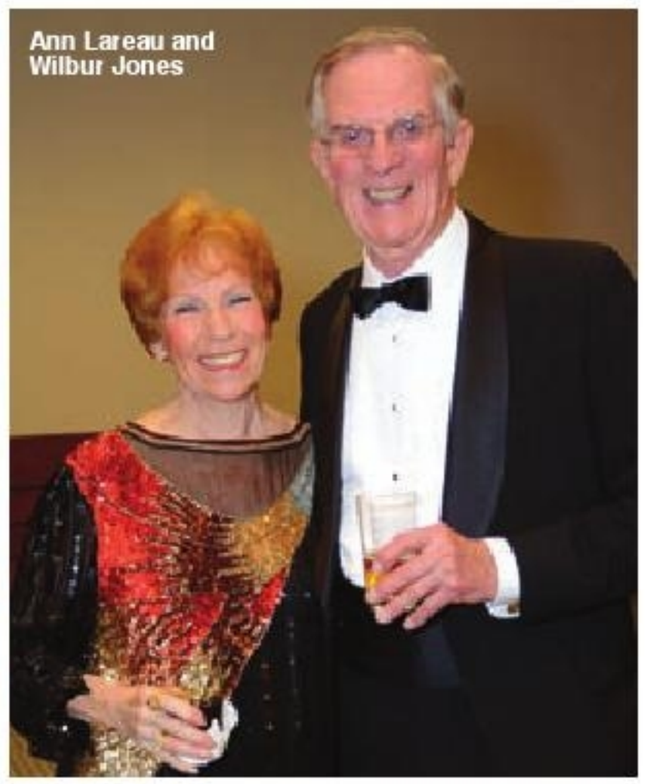
Robert & Lucy Sherman


Jonathon Barfield, Mike Ryan, Ellie Hall

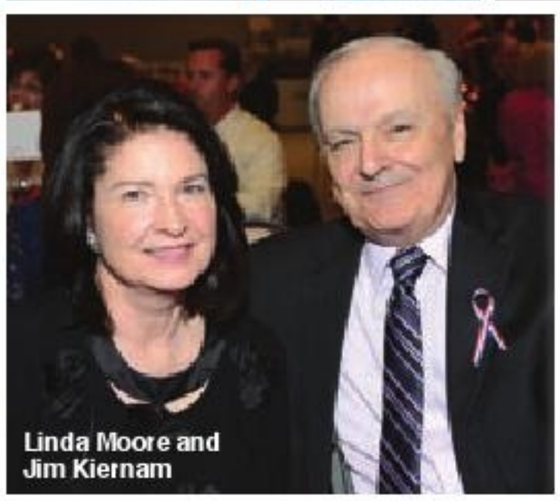

Paul & Liz Hosier

Thomas Elders and Kara Spencer

Sheryl Mays, Amy Mangus


Ann Lareau and Wilbur Jones

Pamela Post and Tami Erves


Linda Moore and Jim Kiernam

Brett Dooies and Alexandra Perillo

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Port City People

18th Annual Landfall Foundation Gala & Auction

The Country Club of Landfall

Saturday, March 28, 2015

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Kristen & Kirk Harmon

Alissa Castello, Barbara & Harry Williams, Melis Canel

Janis & Rolf Sass

Michelle & Doug Thompson

Jessica Spencer, Dr. Stephen Edgerton, Lynn Hilldreth, Cindy Worden, Jessica Schreiber

Lindsey & Misael Otero

Larry Nelson, Harry Williams, Don Lucas

Melis Canel, Trey Herring, Kristie Pate, Cate & Zach Piech

Rise Amos, Ginny Tyndall, Larry Nelson

(Back) Matt Nichols, Steven Garner; Jean Nichols, Beverly Garner, Linda & Neill Currie

Steve & Amanda Salzman

Port City People

Red Cross Gala

Cape Fear Chapter

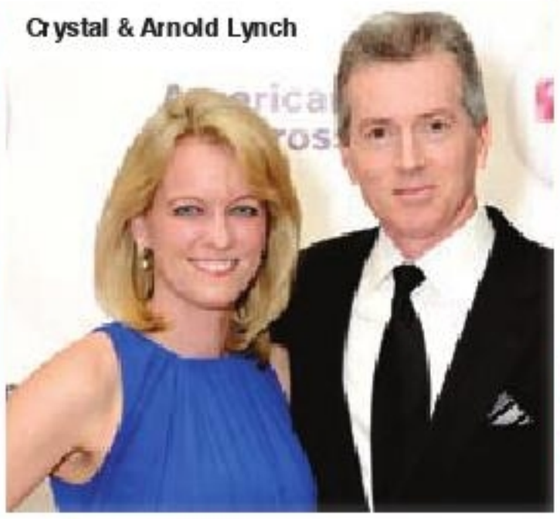
Saturday, March 21, 2015

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

John and Molly Ferrante, Kristen and Michael Shaheen

Kathy Boyhan, Gwyn Hardy, Julie Godley, Melissa Ruhl

Bradley & Julie Coxe



Crystal & Arnold Lynch

Jennifer Sackett and Colleen Moran

Tania Corbi and Michael Voorheis

Michael Hamby and Sharon Edelstein

Aaron & Sara Gilmore

Kori Lankford and Evan Baynic

MOTHER'S DAY IS MAY 10

All moms love less stress, so why not give yours a stress-fix body care gift with an aroma proven to reduce feelings of stress? Better yet, give it to her with a gift card to VanDavis Aveda Salon & Spa so she can unwind with a stress-fix manicure, pedicure, or massage.
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Port City People

Wilmington Fashion Week

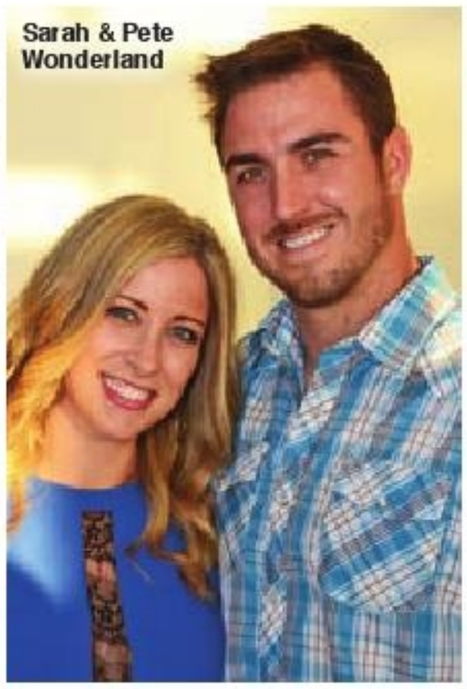
Wilmington Convention Center

Saturday, April 4, 2015

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Ashika Payne and Dena Larry

Anna Mallard, Nancy Clark


Sarah & Pete Wonderland

Mary Schweerc, Taffy Souphab

Kristin & Garret Wood

Nicole Lamparelli, Nick Moriarty, Lauren Lamparelli, Richard Trapp

Hanna Johannsdottir, Madison Phillips

Frederick Cunningham, Monique Williams

Michael Ussery, Jay Workman, Josh Stehno, Taylor Hamilton

Shane Fernando, Beth Crookham

Margie Watkins, Tara Santini

Emily Reynolds, Marie Polak, Tessa Young, Sarah Wonderland Jenna McKnight, Kelli Vossler

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May Day, My Dearies

No bull. Time to be your own person

By Astrid Stellanova

MAYbe you like this month's gentle breezes, taking time for some porch sitting and iced tea. MAYbe you like easy living. And yes, my astral children, MAYbe you are also having a birthday. If you were born under the complicated sign Taurus, MAYbe you have already figured out you get to face some of life's big questions. Not even Astrid can typecast you, Taurus, because you are your own person and face life your own way. Complicated. Smart. Prone to cause and hold grudges. But, make no mistake about it; nobody is more fun than the Taurus when the party gets started. For all of us, this month is all about subtle signs being revealed, and tuning in to them. Pay attention, Star Children.

Taurus (April 20—May 20)
Don't throw shade — go sit in it. Your birthday might be one of the best ones you have had since you were 5 years old. Soon after the candles are blown out on your cake (go on and buy one for yourself if nobody remembers to bake one for you), a series of fortunate events are set in motion by a friend. Behind the scenes, life is going to rapidly shift. When you finally see the outcome, you will be surprised — something that happens rarely to you, little shrewd one.

Gemini (May 21—June 20)
The lessons you faced last month may or may not have been completed. Go back to the blackboard and keep writing. You are in a cycle that will require extreme self-awareness, but not as in is there something stuck in my teeth? If you want to graduate from this psychic lesson, you have simply got to meet the test. But this is also an important transition period, and by the 21st, something key to your happiness shifts in your favor. Don't fail to enter a contest — your luck takes a nice turn. Also, try something you have never done before even if you aren't good at it — like being patient.

Cancer (June 21—July 22)
Use that tax return for at least one downright superficial and completely unnecessary thing. You deserve it, Honey. It was a difficult winter, and you are truly going to enjoy the warm months when a difficult relationship finally thaws out. Somebody close to you needs your friendship more than you do — can you give in and make that call? If you can't do that much, at least quit your bitching about it. Nobody's all wrong, all the time, right?

Leo (July 23—August 22)
Honeybun, your roar is significant but your bite ain't got no force. What happened to your mojo? Go find it. You have moped around for way too long. Get over this pity party and get off the porch while you're at it. By the time you read this, you will have already made at least one startling discovery. Be sure it concerns more than your underwear.

Virgo (August 23—September 22)
I wish I had a dollar for every time a Virgo does somebody a favor. You have been generous in a lot of ways, and now Lady Luck throws the dice your way. Get on your party clothes and show up — it's that simple. Fortune smiles — it is a good time to speculate on real estate or the stock market. But it is a bad time to be hasty, so just read all the fine print. And don't stick your finger in a light socket just to get cheap highlights.

Libra (September 23—October 22)
Whatever you do, stop rewinding the tape on recent events and watching the same old reruns. Move on. Something didn't go to suit you, but you have an opportunity to recover all that was lost. If you keep whining, you might miss the boat while waiting at the airport. Also, try to find your childhood best friend. They have some information you might really enjoy knowing.

Scorpio (October 23—November 21)
Do yourself a favor. Stop calling attention to yourself. Get interested in your best friend, partner, or neighbor. It will really change the crazy dynamic that you got trapped in recently. Also, don't worry about that health scare. You are much healthier than you realized, and get a green pass. It ain't the end of the world if you ain't regular, Honey.

Sagittarius (November 22—December 21)
Did you find something recently that you were delighted to discover? If not, you soon will. I can clearly sense something important is going to resurface; it might have been a childhood book, or your Lassie fan club membership card, or even a time capsule you buried in the back yard. Be thankful, Honey. Meantime, a person close to you is in crisis and could sure as heck use a shoulder to cry on.

Capricorn (December 22—January 19)
The reward for your patience last month is something pretty innocent looking on the surface, but something that will mean a whole lot to you. When this happens, try and pay it forward, Darling. Buy somebody behind you in line a cup of coffee. And practice this little prayer of gratitude to the God of Your Understanding: thank you. Also, if you find yourself with an itch you gotta scratch, just get yourself some Epsom salts and soak.

Aquarius (January 20—February 18)
You are the most complicated buttercup in the field. Never known a sweeter sign, but also never known a more navel-gazing one either. The answers to your loneliness won't happen on Match.com. The answer will come in living your one, big old, glorious life right out loud. Eat more honey. Drink less vinegar. There is a convergence that is going to help lead you away from bewilderment and into green pastures.

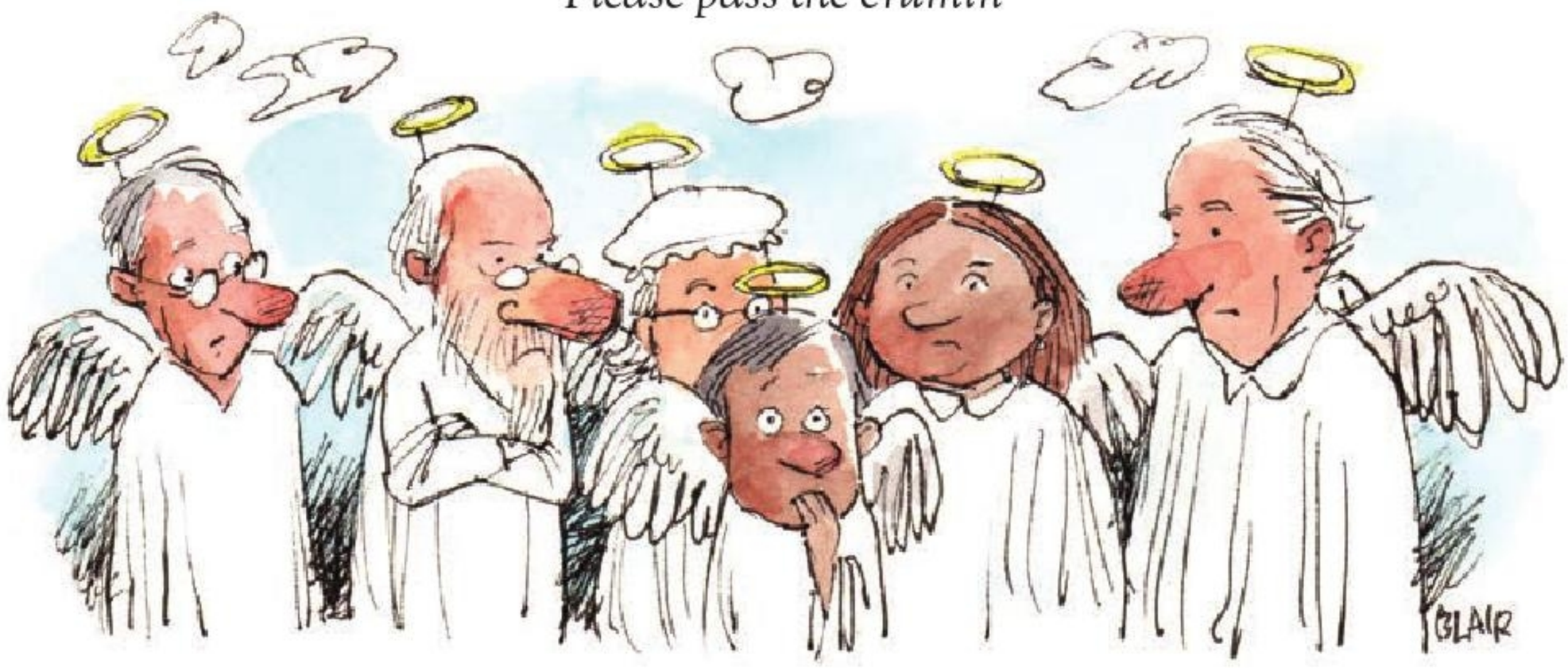
Pisces (February 19—March 20)
Honey, you are attempting to live a chocolate croissant dream in a Moon Pie world. How is it that you are always the odd one out in life? Maybe it is because your dreams are bigger than your hopes. Let them loose, Child! A ticket to Paris ain't out of the question! And if it is, then just buy yourself a café au lait, slap a beret on your head, and Walter Mitty your way into a little happiness until your bank account fattens up.

Aries (March 21—April 19)
The party ain't over yet, Honey. An unexpected guest is about to darken your doorstep, and they will be a handful. You may finally meet your match in the mischief department. Enjoy having your life upended, and just go along for the ride. You know you always liked a pal riding shotgun, and this is a month to just hold onto your liver and your gizzard and your brand new teeth. Excitement coming soon.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Papadaddy Visits Heaven

Please pass the crumin



By Clyde Edgerton

Recently, as a consequence of a botched anesthesia procedure from which he recovered, Papadaddy briefly visited Heaven, then returned to Earth. In Heaven, he wandered along streets of gold, and among gatherings of family members sitting on shaded porches eating meals and talking: grandparents, parents, children, and great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents, all together at once. Papadaddy had a meal with one extended family and reports:

The people at this particular noontime meal were members of the Harris-Williams-Johnson-Stark-Clements, etc. family from Arkansas, Ohio, and Ontario:

- HORACE, an 84-year-old man who died in 1705
- BEATRICE, a 93-year-old woman who died in 1865
- GRANT, a 77-year-old man who died in 1943
- TODDIE, a 59-year-old woman who died in 1990
- SHAWN, 9-year-old boy who died in 2015
- PAPADADDY

HORACE (1705): Can somebody pass the crumin?

SHAWN (2015): What's crumin?

HORACE (1705): That boy shouldn't be speaking at the table — take him outside and flog him.

SHAWN (2015): What's flog?

PAPADADDY (2015): Spank . . . whip, actually. I think you shouldn't be talking, son. I think crumin must be some kind of cornbread. Right over there.

SHAWN (2015): What did I do?

BEATRICE (1865): You broke a custom, child. Hold your tongue.

TODDIE (1990): No. . . not literally, son. Take your hand out of your mouth. It's just an expression.

BEATRICE (1865): We had over fifteen kinds of cornbread when I was coming along. The Indians was good about coming up with all kinds.

SHAWN: (2015) I didn't do anything. I don't want to be quiet. I just got here.

PAPADADDY (2015): I'm sorry.

GRANT (1943): Why are you sorry?

PAPADADDY (2015): Oh, I don't mean I'm sorry about him getting to Heaven. I mean I'm sorry for any suffering of his on Earth.

HORACE (1705): Take him outside and flog him. That'll teach him to talk at a meal.

TODDIE (1990): I don't think that would be kosher — not in Heaven.

HORACE (1705): What's kosher mean?

TODDIE (1990): It means kosher.

PAPADADDY (2015): It means, you know, appropriate.

HORACE (1705): Children do not speak at meals — I don't care where we are. Standards are not temporary habits.

TODDIE (1990): Pretty day, isn't it?

GRANT (1943): I wish it would rain sometimes.

HORACE (1705): Why? We don't need it.

PAPADADDY (2015): How do you keep up these pretty gardens without rain?

BEATRICE (1865): It all happens without weather . . . and then too, we have especially good reading about homes and gardens. Pass the salt, please.

HORACE (1705): And pass the crumin. And why did they take away the servants?

BEATRICE (1865): Because we're in Heaven.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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